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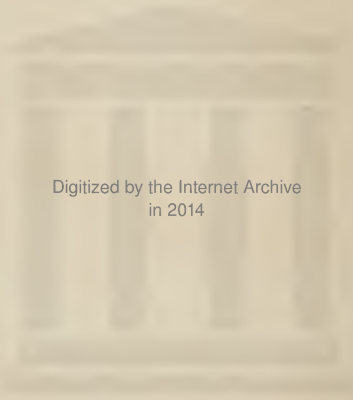
Letter..

No.

March 15th - 1855

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Gathercoal Rabshakeh.
The posthumous letters of
Rev. Rabshakeh Gathercoal





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THE
POSTHUMOUS LETTERS

OF THE

R. M. Beverley

REV. RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL,

LATE VICAR OF TUDDINGTON.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES,

AND DEDICATED TO

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

. NEC LEX EST JUSTIOR ULLA
QUAM NECIS ARTIFICES ARTE PERIRE SUA.

LONDON:
FREDERICK WESTLEY AND A. H. DAVIS.

MDCCCXXXV.

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CONTENTS.

LETTER	PAGE
I.—The Rev. Rabshakeh Gathercoal to L. S. E.— describes the State of his Parish . . .	1
II.—Rab. to the Rev. Julius Scrope—gives an Ac- count of his Conversion . . .	6
III.—Rab. to L. S. E.—the Inaugural Sermon . . .	14
IV.————— Scene in the Vestry; Dinner at the Vicarage . . .	29
V.————— Effect produced by Sermon— Father Oddy reproves the Vicar . . .	35
VI.—The Dissenting Ministers of Tuddington to Rabshakeh . . .	43
VII.—Rabshakeh's reply to the Dissenting Mi- nisters . . .	47
VIII.—Catholic Priest to Rab.: accuses the English Clergy of Heresy . . .	51
IX.—Rab. to the Catholic Priest:—asserts the antiquity of the Established Church . . .	62
X.—The Catholic Priest to Rab. in reply . . .	65
XI.—Rab. to L. S. E. The uneasy state of the Parish, &c. . .	70
XII.—Mrs. Thompson to Rabshakeh . . .	76
XIII.—Rab's. answer to Mrs. Thompson . . .	80
XIV.—Obadiah Crabtree to Rabshakeh . . .	81
XV.—Rab. to L. S. E.—Mervyn's Lecture on Non- conformity . . .	84
XVI.————— Intended sale of sheep for tithe . . .	112

LETTER	PAGE
XVII.—Rab. to L. S. E.—Sale of sheep for tithe. Clerical dinner	119
XVIII.—Frank Emerson to his uncle Rabshakeh— gives some account of Cambridge	143
XIX.——————Prelacy examined by Scrip- ture	155
XX.——————The true Church and its functions	166
XXI.——————Confirmation and Baptism	176
XXII.——————The Priesthood examined.	183
XXIII.——————The Prayer Book—its for- mularies	194
XXIV.——————The Three Creeds	208
XXV.——————The Burial Service	220
XXVI.——————The Psalms in the Prayer Book	224
XXVII.——————The Pride and Luxury of the Prelates	228
XXVIII.——————The Titles and Offices of the Clergy	233
XXIX.——————The Account of his Expul- sion from College, for Non-conformity	243
XXX.—Rab. to L. S. E.—Mrs. G. turned Dis- senter—a union projected with the Metho- dists	265
XXXI.—The Wesleyan Superintendent to Rab.: declines the proposed union	270
XXXII.—Rab. to L. S. E. Church-rates refused	279
The Editor's conclusion of the tragedy	284—288

PREFACE,

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD, D.D.

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON*.

MY LORD,

IN executing the office of Editor of the Letters contained in this volume, I feel myself bound by every tie of duty, respect, and gratitude, to dedicate it to your Lordship, by whose illustrious patronage the letters of L. S. E. have become a text-book amongst the Clergy of the establishment.

We were in a pitiable plight till those Letters were published; every day saw the press teeming with fresh invectives and threats against our holy order,—and the reformers were already feeling our ribs, to ascertain if we were quite fit for

* “The letters of L. S. E., a publication which I recommend as containing a great deal of useful information and sound reasoning, set forth with a little too much sharpness of invective against the Dissenters.”—*Charge of the Bishop of London to the Clergy of his Diocese.*

the shambles ; but now our enemies are covered with confusion, " they are driven back and put to shame," and we who were already tied to the horns of the altar, rear once more our sacred heads, and claim that mastership which the Gospel has given us, and the laws of our country have piously conceded.

We see every day how the venders of quack medicines are compelled to fortify their genuine drugs by threats against imitators, and fac-similes of authentic autographs : this is the case with the " Anti-Schism Pills of L. S. E.," which are already claimed by I know not what insignificant mimics of his name and abilities. A person styling himself " Michael Augustus Gathercole, Curate of Myton, near Boroughbridge," has in the provincial newspapers declared that he is the author of the Letters signed L. S. E. ; but as Editor of this volume, and as a friend of *the true* family, I hereby declare that I know nothing of that person, and that he is no relation of the genuine Gathercoals, whose name is spelt in a different way. Common report says of the curate of Myton, that he was, in his embryo-state, *a bookseller's hawker*, commonly called " a number man," going about the country with works published in cheap numbers ; but whether there is any truth in that report I know not, nor care to know, for my only business

here is with the fame of my friend, whose efforts for the supremacy of his Order are here recorded. The Letters of the Vicar of Tuddington make it pretty clear who the "*vrai Amphitryon*" is; so that the epistles of L. S. E. will not be handed down to posterity with the mysterious motto *STAT NOMINIS UMBRA*; nor will future generations have to inquire who that great man was that Bishops loved, and Archbishops admired.

The true Gathercoal has an A in the coal; no spurious coal, but genuine bituminous inflammable matter, brought into day-light out of the nether regions, and used in purposes of combustion and smoke.

The elder brother of the Vicar of Tuddington was baptized with the names Lucifer, Sandeman, Euroclydon; and the following account is given of these somewhat eccentric titles by friends of the family:—"Lucifer" is *the morning star*; which it was determined should be the first name of the first born, to gratify the wishes of a rich old lady, a distant relation, who was an admirer of Moore's Almanac, and addicted to astrology. The family were a long time in doubt whether they should call the lad Lucifer, Phosphorus, or Morning Star, but amongst these synonymes, they at last decided for Lucifer, which gives us the first initial, L——.

The second name, "Sandeman," was added to gratify Mrs. G., who not liking the sound of Lucifer, insisted on giving another name of her own choice : she fixed on Sandeman, her favourite divine—and hence the second initial, S——.

"Euroclydon," the third name, is "the tempestuous wind," mentioned in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts, which blew upon the ship when they came near the isle of Crete, — Crete that island renowned for liars ;—for it so happened that Mr. G. was reading the verse in which mention is made of this wind, when news was brought him that Mrs. G. had presented him with a son. As the north-east wind—Euroclydon—was blowing a hurricane at that very time, Mr. G. determined by giving this name, to fix on his memory the exact time and circumstances of the birth of his first born : and hence the third letter E.

Here then your Lordship sees the mystery of L. S. E's. initials, which ought to be set in brilliants, in a love-knot, with three other letters, C. J. B., not less dear to the Church of England ; for it is to your Lordship that we must attribute the success of those celebrated epistles which have both restored the fainting strength of our venerable mother, and inflicted nausea on her malignant enemies.

And the thanks and gratitude due to your lord-

ship must by no means be withheld, seeing that a suspicion was unjustly entertained in some quarters that your Lordship was not THOROUGH, but was disposed to lean to a liberal policy, which in these days is another word for revolution. It is said that your brother Prelates have by no means felt or expressed a cordial approbation of your tactics, especially during Lord Grey's administration; but all doubts must now be removed, and the whole body of the Clergy must confess that you are a staunch advocate of that system which Archbishop Laud significantly termed THOROUGH.

I know not well how to account for these ill-grounded doubts to which I have alluded, for in truth my slight observation would have led me to a different conclusion: only this seems certain, that some persons have entertained doubts of the soundness of your theology, which, they say, cannot be reconciled with the doctrines contained in the Articles, Liturgy and Homilies: and if it should turn out that your Lordship is not a churchman in doctrine, how can you, it is asked, be so in any other respect? Now on this topic I will not undertake to decide anything, for I know by experience how impossible it is to get at the meaning of words when churchmen are resolved to interpret a document according to their own system; and I have observed that a Bishop can take a

chapter of the Bible, or an Article, and by means of some secret alchemy, turn it out in so new a form, and with such a different aspect, that no man could have imagined he was in the presence of an old friend ;—therefore, I say, I will myself pronounce nothing, but simply state what people assert. Now these doubters declare that the founders and first Bishops of the Established Church were notorious Calvinists ; that the Articles are Calvinistic, and that for a century nothing but pure Calvinism was tolerated in the Church of England. In proof of this assertion they quote the famous seventeenth Article, which for nearly two centuries has been a slough of despond for Bishops and Prebendaries, a soft place for dignified feet—and which never yet has been filled up, though no man can calculate the cart-loads of Arminian rubbish in the shape of books and sermons, which have been thrown in here to make the road to Lambeth and York more pleasant, but without the slightest visible amendment.

Thus speaketh the Article :—“ Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as

vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endowed with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season—they through grace obey the calling—they be *justified freely*; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting salvation." Parallel with this article they place your Lordship's published sentiments:—

“ St. John called our Saviour the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world: not of the chosen few, the predestinated, but of the whole world, whose sins being thus taken away, *they are justified*, and may be saved if they please*.

“ When the Apostle tells them to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, he does in effect tell them that it may be forfeited, and lost for want of diligence: and that, therefore, none of them can have been for a surety chosen beforehand of God to be saved. All the other passages in the writings of the Apostles where election is mentioned, are to be explained in like manner;

* “ Sermon on Predestination, intended for the use of country congregations; by Charles James Blomfield, D.D., Rector of St. Botolph's; 1820.”

so that the term elect is never used to distinguish some Christians from others, but to distinguish all Christians in general from those who had not taken up the Christian profession ; all who are baptized into the name of Christ and profess his saving faith are elect, and yet may forfeit their election by unchristian conduct. All who disown that holy name, or dishonour it by their practise, are *reprobate*, and yet by God's grace they may be brought back into the truth, and rooted in the faith, and by diligence make their calling and election sure.

“ There are no doubt some expressions in the writings of St. Paul, which seem at first sight to give some countenance to the doctrine of predestination to life ; but St. Peter has told us that in the writings of that great Apostle there are some things hard to be understood, amongst which we may safely* reckon those which I refer—*i. e.* Rom. viii. 29.”

The question then seems to be this, is the seventeenth Article the language of Calvin, and is your Lordship's doctrine that of Arminius ? Does your lordship sing the same song with the Article ? or is your lordship out of tune ? I have heard a cockatoo and a bulfinch sing together, but they seemed to me rather out of tune.

* Compare this with Bradwardine's words in the next note.

There was a time, my Lord, when the House of Commons resented with high wrath any the smallest deviation from Calvinism, because they saw clearly, first, that the Church of England was Calvinistic, and secondly, that Arminian tenets were embraced by all the enemies of the country, and that Papists, semi-Papists, and Bishops, are always taking refuge in those doctrines which the Reformation confuted and confounded. And there are persons even now who say, that if the majority of the House of Commons consisted, at this present time, of true Calvinists, it would be much better for the nation, and that we could depend upon the principles of such men much more than we can on that mighty sect of Free-thinkers which now prevails there—but this is merely an opinion: I am now about matters of fact, and your Lordship must remember how smart the Commons used to be upon the Arminians. For instance, in the reign of Charles I., they laid hold of one Montague, a High-Church clergyman, who had published a sermon containing theology, very like your Lordship's, and, on review of this sermon, they resolved, that "Whereas the Seventeenth Article had declared, &c. (quoting the article at length), he, the said Richard Montague, in the said book, doth affirm and maintain that men justified may fall away from that state

which they once had, thereby laying a most malicious scandal upon the Church of England, as if she did differ herein from the Reformed Churches in England, and from the Reformed Churches beyond the sea, and did consent unto those pernicious errors commonly called Arminianism, which the late famous Queen Elizabeth and King James, of happy memory, did so piously and religiously labour to suppress," &c. &c. And on another occasion they came to the following resolution, "Whoever shall bring in innovation of religion, or by favour or countenance seek to extend Popery and Arminianism, or other opinion disagreeing from the truth, or orthodox church, shall be reputed *a capital enemy to the kingdom and commonwealth;*" by which grave decree it seems highly probable, that had your Lordship lived in those times your Lordship would have got into a scrape, from which it would have been no easy matter to extricate your Lordship.

Now, persons who attentively consider these things, and who have noticed the zeal of the Prelates in introducing Arminian and Pelagian tenets into the Church of England, compare these dignitaries to fish, which being captivated with the appearance of a fat worm, as it hangs on the fisherman's hook, find that there is something more in the worm than they can comfort-

ably digest ; for, though the Bishops find the bait of the mitre infinitely delightful, they also discover that the hook of the article is infinitely disagreeable, and in their efforts to disgorge that which they have swallowed, they only vomit up floods of Pelagian* bile in the shape of "Charges to the Clergy," "Sermons for Country Congregations," and "Elements of Christian Theology." And I do not wonder that Calvinism should be extremely indigestible to the Bishops, for with it there always is acting a *movement spirit*, if I may so term it—a discordance with the "wisdom of ancestors," which is the very oxygen in the atmosphere of Priests, and without which they cannot exist. I take it to be an axiom in the priestly mysteries, that the "wisdom of ancestors" is the breath of their nostrils ; for there never was yet a priesthood, nor ever will be to the end of time, which did not refer to the ancestral wisdom as the truest and the best. In the religion of the clergy there is a noble maxim, "Si mundus vult

* Bradwardine, that famous champion of the Truth, speaks eloquently on this subject, "Ecce enim quod non nisi tactu doloris refero, sicut olim contra unum Dei Prophetam, octingenti et quinquaginta Prophetæ Baal, et similes reperti sunt, quibus et innumerabilis populus adhærebat ; ita et hodiè in hac causâ, quot O Domine, cum Pelagio pro libero arbitrio contra gratuitam gratiam tuam pugnant, et contra Paulum pugilem gratiæ specialem ? exsurge ergo, O Domine, sustine, protige, consolare," &c.

vadere sicut vult, mundus debet vadere sicut vult," that is, "If the world likes to jog on in the old way, in the old way the world ought to jog on," which also is expressed sometimes in these words, "Let well alone*;" for why should anything be changed? Were not our ancestors wiser men than we? Which of living animals, excepting man, seeks to deviate from the parental path? Does the bee buzz for reform? or does the spider alter the old orthodox interstices and intersections of its web? Man, and man only, is clamouring for change, and seeking out many inventions. "Be not followers of them which are given to change," is, therefore, the sweetest text in the Bible, and has been preached on more than any other; for when we consider the Cardinals who have preached on it against the Huguenots, the Abbots against the Lutherans, and the English Bishops against the Reformers—when we think how the Albigenses and the Vaudois, the French Calvinists and the Lollards, the Puritans and the Brownists, have all

* There is an old adage, that "Truth lies hid in the bottom of a well," and from this adage I imagine that other saying has arisen, "Let well alone," for if truth is at the bottom of the well, it is very natural for the clergy to request the people "to let the well alone:" drawing water from the well, or any way disturbing it, might be the means of bringing truth into day-light; therefore, "Let well alone by all means."

smarted under this text, we must needs acknowledge that there is none like it in Scripture. If Reformers and Independents would let the world jog on in the old way, we should have Bishops and Priests, Cardinals and Brahmins, Bonzes and Grand Lamas, to the end of the chapter—for in the eye of a philosopher there is no difference; they all hold the same office, with a variation of costume, but a philosopher sees through robes of ceremony, and he classifies under one genus the Brahminical thread of a Guru, the triple crown of a Pope, the yellow apron of a Lama, and the lawn sleeves of an English Bishop.

Now, as the tendency of mankind, in all ages, is to priestly government, how comes it that any antagonist power has risen up to oppose the natural march of the human mind, and what is this power? The Dissenters tell us it is the Gospel, your Lordship will say it is Beelzebub; and here your Lordship and the Dissenters are at issue. This, however, is certain, that, if the Gospel is not this antagonist power, it rests with those who have *misinterpreted* the Gospel; for there is not a spot on the face of the earth where priests are opposed, excepting where the Bible is in popular use. It is clear, therefore, that if the Bible does not condemn a priesthood, those

people only who read the Bible are the opponents of a priesthood.

The question, then, in this momentous crisis is, "What is to be done?" To seal up the Bible in these days I consider hopeless. The Bishops did their worst to crush the Bible Societies, but without effect; and I should suppose that Sir Robert Peel would hardly turn his thoughts to a suppression of the Scriptures, in order to save the Church of England. But if the light cannot be extinguished, can it not be darkened? Let us consider the question more attentively.

Now, it seems to me, (an attentive observer of mankind,) that as the strength of the clergy consists chiefly in cherishing that bias of the mind and affections, which, in theologic language, is called the "natural man;" so I should recommend the friends of the Establishment to study those things which the natural man doth most covet, and to feed him to the full accordingly. The natural man, then, being a superstitious animal, and the secret of all superstition resting in the dominion which the senses may be brought to obtain over the mind in religious notions, I know nothing better for the Church of England, as matters now stand, than to increase *her Ritual*,

which may be easily done in the projected Reform of the Prayer Book. "The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies," says the Twentieth Article. Why, then, doth not the Church exercise this power? We have had nothing new since the Restoration of the Stuarts; and, as for the paltry ceremonies which we now possess, such as bowing to the East, making the sign of the cross in baptism, dressing in lawn-sleeves, surplices, hoods, and square caps; walking into choirs preceded by beadles, singing prayers in cathedral fashion, and some score more of such amusements—they are not worth naming. We want a good dish-full of ceremonics, a complete new edition of processions, set to new tunes, with new machinery, scenery, dresses, and decorations—and, indeed, it is a shame that more is not done in this way, seeing the ample space of the cathedrals and great churches, which were built for exhibitions of this sort, and are never crowded with large congregations, according to the vulgar practice of conventicles. There is room enough, and to spare, for the clergy, to perform all sorts of ceremonies, if they choose it; therefore, I say, let the Church exercise that prerogative which the Tenth Article has asserted, and let the Dissenters be ashamed out of their puritanical plainness.

Next to ceremonies, I find traditions a most excellent recipe. Traditions have been much used by the Church, and have, within the last two or three years, come greatly into fashion again; so that Ignatius, Barnabas, Clement, Hermes, and Irenæus, the Apostolical constitutions, and the Councils are now rescued from Bodleian dust, and sent forth in dainty extracts by Oxford tracts and clerical pamphlets; and this, my Lord, is as it should be, for it is a sad oversight to allow the Pope a monopoly of Fathers and Councils; they are wanted at Lambeth full as much as at the Vatican. And the advantage of appealing to the Fathers, Councils, Decretals,* Canons, or, in one word, to *tradition*, is this, that there is no imaginable desideratum which may not be found in that quarter. Whatever your Lordship may think useful or agreeable I will undertake to furnish out of that storehouse—tithes, Bishops, Archbishops, images, Archdeacons, processions, Deans, fine dresses, ceremonies of every description; quick march round the altar, slow march, bowing, kneeling, sitting down, standing up, knocking the

* In the Decretals, Causa XII. Can. *Dilectissimis*, &c., that decree of Clement is set down at large, where Plato is praised and called the wisest of the Grecians for teaching that women should be common.

head and the breast ; fasts, feasts, empty bellies and full bellies ; holy water, bells, wax-candles, anthems, solos, incense, saints, martyrs, mediators, intercessors, union of Church and State, anointing Kings and Queens, confirmation, comminations, catechisms, creeds, salt and spittle, prebends, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, church-wardens, painted windows, clerical titles, rubrics, college caps, Lent, lawn sleeves, and what not. Only in appealing to tradition, and in quoting the Fathers, it should be done judiciously ; we must omit the story of the Phoenix in Clemens Romanus, and keep in the back ground some strange fables preserved by Irenæus ; for it would be a sad blunder to republish in the Oxford tracts the story of Lot's wife, told by that ancient Father, who says she was in his time existing as a pillar of salt, and known to be the Patriarch's wife by infallible indications. Neither must we record that other tradition of his, which he declares he received from some Presbyters who heard it from St. John the Evangelist—that —— said “ the time should come when vine-trees would grow, each having ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand stalks, and on each stalk ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand bunches, and on each bunch ten thousand grapes, and every grape should yield twenty-five measures

of wine; and when some of the Saints should essay to gather one of the bunches, another bunch should cry out, 'Gather me, I am a finer bunch; bless the Lord through me,' &c.

Keeping traditions of this sort out of sight, we may, my Lord, with much advantage, make use of Fathers and Councils, to prove the three orders, and such other points as are fundamental in the Church of England.

With these hints for things to be done, a word may be added as to what should *not* be done; for the natural man must be considered in his dislikes as well as in his likings. Now it may be taken as an axiom that the natural man dislikes to be robbed and murdered; and therefore with all humility I recommend that the Clergy of our scriptural Church should cease to exact tithes at the point of the bayonet, and that, for the present at least, such battles as those fought at Skibbereen and Rathcormac should be rather avoided than sought after; for though the affair of Rathcormac was a splendid victory, and though the fourth Irish Dragoons did on that day commit a great slaughter of the enemy, yet no one can tell where violence of this sort may end; we have the three days of Paris before us; we see there how an attack on the people has terminated; and that which has been done in one country may be done

in another. I therefore recommend to your Lordship and the whole bench of Bishops a more mild use of the shepherd's crook as the best policy to be adopted by the constituted Pastors; and, whenever it shall be requisite to terrify the sheep, to substitute the charges of Bishops for the charges of Dragoons; for if ever the people should be exasperated into open defiance, and if ever the Reformers should be the masters of the Church, we may surmise that *the mitre* would not be the least protection to its wearer, but rather show a broader mark to the missiles of the enemy—it would be as the lantern hung on the waistcoat of the Duc d'Enghein when he fell at the night time in the castle fosse of Vincennes.*

After all, my Lord, I do not pretend to predict that the system can be certainly perpetuated by anything we can do. There is an ugly look about the spirit of this generation which frightens me. The march of intellect is worse to the Clergy than the march of a hundred thousand men with fixed bayonets. Intellect is a great, grim, striding giant, with a huge besom that no man can measure, and with this he sweepeth away the wisdom of ancestors as if it was only a spider's web in his path; a cathedral and a Bishop he can shovel up

* *Decus et tutamen*, by the Reverend J. Riland.

in a trice, and tithes are nothing but the dust beneath his feet. He has already swept away half a dozen Bishops in Ireland, what will he not do when he steps over the channel?

And here, my Lord, I pause to express my astonishment at the conservatives, who now praise Lord Stanley as the great prop of the Church—Lord Stanley, who has abolished bishoprics—he a friend of the Church!

The historian Collier, a high Church clergyman, has spoken pertinently to the point. “As to the parallel between the Princess Elizabeth and her sister Queen Mary, may it not be affirmed that one made martyrs in the Church and the other beggars; the one executed the men, and the other the estates? And therefore reserving the honour of the Reformation to Queen Elizabeth, the question will be whether the retaining the first fruits and tenths, putting many of the vicarages in this deplorable situation, and settling a perpetuity of poverty upon the Church, was not much more prejudicial than fire and faggot—whether DESTROYING BISHOPRICS is not a much greater hardship than destroying Bishops? because this severity affects succession, and reaches down to future ages; and lastly, whether, as the world goes, it is not more easy to recruit Bishops than the revenues to support them?”

In other words, the hanging a Bishop is only hanging a John or a Thomas, but the extinction of a bishopric is a large massacre, the whole breed of Bishops in that diocese extirpated for ever; a crime of huge iniquity—an act of most blood-thirsty and barbarous cruelty. But if crimes like these are perpetrated by the friends of the Establishment, what will its enemies do? If the lovers of “time-hallowed” institutions give us this deadly hug in the way of affection, what will the great Boa-constrictor, Radical Reform, effect, when it comes to squeeze the Church in its voluminous embrace?

My Lord, these thoughts are somewhat of a melancholy strain, and indeed what Churchman in these days can be very jocund when he looks at the prospect before the Church? That pernicious method of arguing with Churchmen on first principles is now so common, and so universal is the cry to try the prelacy by the Gospel, that we are already condemned in every town and village, and held up as deceivers in every parish. They compare the Church and the clergy with the Church and the clergy of the New Testament, and will hearken to none of our exceptions, allegorics, and metaphors. They declare that our ghostly authority is all a trick; they laugh at the white sheet, the turnip, and the tallow candle,

and are come to that point which Strabo* never anticipated—to ridicule all contrivances of superstition, and yet to adhere more than ever to solid piety.

Against this spirit it is most difficult to contend; if the quarrel were in the old style about a heresy, a point in metaphysics, a vowel, or a diphthong—if it were about the precedence of metropolitans, the proper days to keep a festival, or the orthodox way of breaking an egg, one might have some hope of getting out of the difficulty; but when they attack the very foundation, and boldly assert that the Gospel doth not allow such a thing as a Priest, it shows that the old Quaker leaven hath leavened the whole lump, and that the candle of priesthood is in danger of being overwhelmed with a broad-brim extinguisher.

My Lord, I finish these remarks, by earnestly requesting your Lordship to bestir yourself; for the voluntary system is at the door, loudly knocking for admittance. If ever that monster should pass

* “Women,” says Strabo, “and the promiscuous crowd cannot be actuated by the lessons of philosophy, nor by these be led to religion, sanctity, and faith. They must be urged by superstitions, and this cannot be done without legends and miracles. The thunder, the ægis, the trident, the torches, and the serpents; the ivy-circled spears and the fabled arms of the Gods, were used by the founders of politics as hobgoblins for infantile minds.”

the threshold, we are all undone—ruined horse and foot, root and branch. A Gospel Reformation will be inexpressibly horrible; it will be like the entrance of the Medes into Babylon to sweep all clean “with the besom of destruction.” The Bishops will have to leave their palaces, the chapters must quit the cathedrals, the clergy their pluralities; no more tithes great or small; no agistment, valuation, dilapidations, fines, or fees; no sale of livings; no knocking down of immortal souls by the auctioneer’s hammer; no translations; no letters demissory, licenses, or certificates: farewell glebes and parsonage houses! farewell warrants, policemen, and soldiers! farewell mitres and titles! farewell grants of Parliament! We shall be left to our own resources, our corks will be taken away from us, and we must either sink or swim; and then indeed shall we at last be compelled “to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, to do the work of Evangelists, and to give full proof of our ministry.”

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship’s,

Obedient humble Servant,

THE EDITOR.

March, 1835.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER the above prefatory address had been written and put into the printer's hands, the Editor heard with amazement that "My Lord of London" had sung his palinody on the subject of the letters of L. S. E.

His Lordship's first recommendation was in these words:—"Other instances (of Dissenters' delinquencies) are given in a publication which I RECOMMEND as containing a great deal of USEFUL INFORMATION and SOUND REASONING, set forth with a *little* too much warmth of invective against the Dissenters, entitled, 'Letters to a Dissenting Minister of the Congregational Denomination, by L. S. E.'"

In the second edition of the Charge in which this recommendation had appeared, and *after* the publication of "A Remonstrance addressed to the Lord Bishop of London by Charles Lushington, Esq.," his Lordship—*quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore!*—utters this lamentable strain:—"In the first edition of this charge *reference* was made to a publication which contains some other instances of the disingenuous proceedings of the Society in

question. *Upon a close examination* of the work alluded to, I have thought it right to *suppress my reference to it* on account of the controversial bitterness with which it is disfigured"!!! Who could have thought that such a valiant CHARGE would have ended in this inglorious flight, and that a renowned Prelate would thus have scampered out of the field of battle after the heroic display of his first onset? "I protest by them that fell at Marathon" this is worse than a Persian overthrow. And behold the results! those monsters, those ruffians, those brigands, the Dissenters, have already erected a trophy to our durable disgrace, and even *the person Binney* has been enabled to triumph over us with a most afflicting scorn. Thus says that person :

"When any man 'recommends' a book with which most other men are disgusted, the following alternative and train of reflection instantly present themselves to a thoughtful observer: 'He either read this book or he did not; if he did, it is a question of taste; if he did not, it is one of integrity. The first in a Christian would be disgrace; the second in a gentleman dishonour.'" This I think would be as natural as it is just. If, however, it were to be supposed that the *latter* was the case of a Christian Prelate writing to his clergy, and writing for the public, there are perhaps

no words in any language that could express either the feelings of an honourable mind towards such delinquency, or the extent and magnitude of the delinquency itself. So strongly do I perceive this, that when I have heard it stated, by way of apology (*as I have often*) that his Lordship could not have read the book in question, but had been misled by depending on the opinion, and taking the word, of some injudicious friend, I have always expressed my hope that such was not the case, as it would certainly be rather an aggravation than an apology. What! books to be "recommended" from the Episcopal bench—a *character of them*, and a *description of their contents* deliberately penned and sent forth to the public as a Bishop's personal judgment—which books he had not personally read! The thing is too monstrous to be thought of, or to be admitted for a moment as within the compass of possibility. No! times of controversy may *warp* the judgment and destroy the taste for a while even of a Christian; but surely this should never be attempted to be palliated by what would be a violation of principle itself. I have always thought, therefore, that it ought to be admitted by all, whether the personal friends and apologists, or the ecclesiastical adversaries, of the Bishop of London, that he could not *but* have read the

book of which he gave an account, and to which he attached his open and voluntary "I RECOMMEND," from the very circumstance of what would be involved in his conduct if he had *not*.

But I beg to ask, if any man, who had seen nothing but his Lordship's "note," would ever dream that what he twice gently terms "*a reference*" to a publication was actually a distinct and emphatic RECOMMENDATION of it, with a statement of *the reasons* of that recommendation? "A publication which *I recommend* as containing a great deal of useful information," &c., is thus to be suppressed—softly put out of the way as a *reference*—a sort of passing allusion, that may be made one moment and forgotten the next." [Dissent not Schism, a Discourse delivered in the Poultry Chapel, by T. Binney, Dec. 12, 1834.]

In conclusion, the Editor of this volume has to complain of the treatment which L. S. E. has received in various high places; for, besides the Bishop of London's "*recommendation*," made by that learned Prelate a synonyme with "reference"—the Editor of the British Magazine has also vacillated in his opinions on the merit of this valuable collection of letters. The January Number of the British Magazine abused Mr. Gathercole (not the true Gathercoal), in very plain language, for his violence and "rampant stolidity,"

and said some very coarse and unhandsome things of his clerical coadjutors. The Number for March (XXXIX, p. 320) has, however, tried to make amends for its previous rudeness in these soothing words: "Mr. G. will, if he will control his expressions, be able to render SIGNAL SERVICE to the Church." This is as it should be; and it is to be hoped that the Bishop of London will, in a third edition of his Charge, return to his RECOMMENDATIONS, and explain away his REFERENCES.

EDITOR.

POSTHUMOUS LETTERS,
 &c.

LETTER I.

The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL,
 to L. S. E.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE this day taken possession of the Vicarage of Tuddington, where I hope to be of eminent service to that apostolical Church of which I am an unworthy Priest. You desire to know all the particulars of my new pastoral charge. First then touching the fleece, which I hold to be a very essential part of the true Church of Christ according to apostolical tradition. The living I find for the last seven years produced about 450*l.* to the last Vicar; but Mr. Screw, a very pious attorney of this place, assures me that I may easily make 600*l.* per annum by compelling all the small gardeners, who are very numerous, to pay their dues without allowing any deduction. The late Vicar, a man of loose princi-

ples, who had no regard for the welfare of his successors, has never pressed his demands on the gardeners ; but I feel it a duty I owe to the Church to gather to the utmost farthing, and I have already given directions to the excellent and orthodox Mr. Screw to take the proper steps in this business. You know, my dear Brother, that "the ox which treadeth out the corn is not to be muzzled:" we who are successors of the Apostles, have we not power to eat and drink? for who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? I intend to get all the corn I can, and all the milk I can; would that I could indeed eat of the great tithes! But, alas! the impiety of a generation which hated the Church has robbed the clergy of their dues, and the great tithes are in the hands of the Duke of ———. Something, however, still remains worth eating, and I will take care that no muzzle is put on the mouth of your dutiful brother Rabshakeh.

The vicarage is a good house; it wants, however, a bath-room and a conservatory; and I intend to make Mrs. Thompson, the late Vicar's widow, pay my bill for these desiderata, in the form of dilapidations, which we estimated as high as 470*l.* Mrs. Thompson pleads her nine children, but she has done too much mischief in the parish to find any mercy from me.

The spiritual state of the parish is deplorable.

The population of the town is about 6,000 souls. The Independent Chapel has a congregation of 500; the Baptists, 300; the Wesleyan Methodists, 800; the Ranters, 400; the Roman Catholics, 100; the Quakers, 50. All this pestilential swarm of Dissenters is owing to the lax discipline and bad principles of the late Vicar.

Thompson was one of your Evangelicals, a canting hypocrite, whose maxims were full of mischief. Dear Screw says he was always preaching justification by faith, and that he taught false doctrine about the true Church by totally omitting to show that in the Church of England only is there salvation. He never said a word about the sin of schism and dissent, and by this method the parish church was crowded in the morning service—but by what sorts of persons? Why, one-half of his congregation, at the very least, were Dissenters; for there was a general feeling amongst the schismatics to go to Church once on Sundays. Their phrase was, “they wished to show respect to Mr. Thompson, who was a very good man, and preached the Gospel.”

You will be shocked to hear that the Vicar went so far as to ask the Dissenting Ministers to dine at the Vicarage, two or three times every year. Really this was too bad: it has made the parlour smell of schism, so that I have been obliged to have it new painted and coloured, to

get rid of the puritanical odour. Thompson often drank tea with the Independent teacher, who instructed him in Hebrew; and he in return taught the teacher's eldest lad algebra, and the elements of methematics.

The effect of this system you may easily conceive. All things are topsyturvy. The Church of England has lost all that dignity and pre-eminence which are due by apostolical constitution; and the Church people, if Church people they can be called, care nothing for Bishops, Archdeacons, and tithes.

There is not a tract of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in the whole parish; Thompson denounced them from the pulpit, but the Tract Society's poison is in every house in the town. The people seem to me either decided Calvinists, or fanatical Arminians, and every old woman talks of her "experience," and praises "good Mr. Thompson." In short, I find myself amongst a perverse and crooked generation, strangers to the scriptural authority of the Clergy, and nursed in the ignorance of dissent and schism. By all this you may judge there is much work on my hands, but the greater the obstacles the greater shall be my zeal; and guiding myself by those glorious doctrines so ably advocated in the fourteen letters of L. S. E., I hope shortly to bring about a complete reformation in this dark and heathenish town.

My next will, I hope, let you fully into my plans, which I intend to put into operation without delay ; for no time must be lost in resisting the encroachment of those swarming locusts the Dissenters, who will soon eat up every green thing in the earth, or what is worse, prevent the clergy from eating that verdure and fatness of the land which is theirs by apostolical right.

I am,

My dear Brother,

Yours most affectionately,

RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

LETTER II.

*The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL to the
Reverend JULIUS SCROPE, Rector of Amber-
well.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received your flattering and kind letter, and hasten to reply to its contents. Allow me, however, to remark, that the compliments which you bestow on my zeal and abilities are wholly undeserved; the merit of my exertions must be attributed to the influence of L. S. E., whose letters have hitherto been the oracle of my actions and the guide of my counsels.

You wish to hear the process of my conversion from the powers of darkness unto light, from Dissenting conventicles to the communion of the Church of England. You will have already learned from the letters of my elder brother, L. S. E., that my parents were "rigid Dissenters, of the Congregational Independent denomination." My honoured father was a tallow chandler, and under the paternal roof I was educated in the odour of sanctity and of boiling tallow. Like my dear brother, I was what he calls "a Dissenter on principle;" that is, I railed against the Church

of England, and called its members Papists and idolaters. My father used often to rebuke my violence, and though he was a rigid Dissenter, he frequently advised me to hold my tongue, to read and meditate much more, to study the Scriptures with prayer and humility, and not enter into controversy, for which I was in every way unprepared. "The Established Church," he used to say, "is certainly, in many respects, open to animadversion, and its Church government is a relic of Popery, which cannot be defended by Scripture warranty; but I had much rather see such a stripling as thee lay in a greater store of information, and study history, sacred and profane, than thus prate about matters of which thou knowest nothing. Let thy principles, Rab, be better grounded and settled before thou goest about to attack the creed of thy neighbours. This sort of zeal is likely to blaze out very soon, and to leave nothing but ashes. When religion is only controversy, it often finishes in apostacy; get thy heart humbled, and *learn* first before thou *teachest*. Besides, Rab, our business will be at a stand-still. Go and draw the dips."

When I had come to ripe manhood I was very much vexed to see my dear elder brother give up his principles and the business of our shop, and I was quite mad against him when people said

he was certainly turning Churchman. One day we came to high words on the subject, for the Bishop had been in the town confirming children in the parish church, and I, being then in darkness, made some profane jokes on his venerable wig and apron. I asked my brother, if the Bishop's apron was to shovel in the good things of the land, for people had been talking of a great fine he had lately pocketed, not less than £ 30,000. "St. Paul," I said, "did not wear aprons, because he had no fines to carry off." On this my brother flew into a rage, and called me "a canting schismatical jackanapes," which I answered by a smart and stinging repartee. With this prelude of theological skill we proceeded to blows, and, I must confess, that L. S. E. came off victorious, for who can resist this Goliath ?

After this controversy, I reflected that the weight of the argument was certainly with my brother, and that the chastisement I had received was a very convincing *argumentum ad hominem*. I made up my mind, from this time, to keep my temper in his presence, and not to rail against Church people and Bishops, though it was a bitter pill for me to see him take orders and become a clergyman.

One day, not long after his ordination, he was sitting in our back parlour, reading a huge folio Prayer Book, and explaining to us the excellency

of the services for all occasions, particularly the ordination of Priests and Deacons, and consecration of Bishops. From this he proceeded in his usual way to attack the Dissenters, asserting that the Church of England had a right "to *command compliance* with her rites and ceremonies,"* and that "the petty sects of Dissenters were bound to obey;" that if anything was wrong no man had any authority to find fault with what the clergy commanded,† but "must wait until the Lord come," when all matters would be set right, and they who had obeyed the parsons would go to Paradise. He said that Korah, Dathan and Abiram‡ were Dissenters of the Congregational Independent order,—that Korah was the Minister, and Dathan and Abiram were the Deacons, and that they were swallowed up in a flaming gulf for dissenting from the Church as by law established. This comment I could not bear, and, quite forgetting our former controversy, I threw the ink-bottle full at his face, spoiling his Reverence's white neckcloth and bands, which he had been arranging at the looking-glass. His Reverence, however, had a tremendous weapon in his hands, the folio Prayer Book, a yard long, and very ponderous: with this he inflicted such a blow on my head that I fell senseless at his feet: a fair representative of Dissenters

* Letter vii. p. 212. † vii. p. 217.

‡ Letters of L. S. E. *passim*.

under the arm of the clergy. I did not recover from this controversy for six months, and to this day I see specks and dancing spots in the field of vision whenever my angry feelings are excited, as they always are when I meet a Dissenter.

This quarrel, however, was made up at last in an amicable way, and my reverend brother, as a token of reconciliation, gave me a copy of his Letters, which had just appeared from the press. He begged me to take it with me into Buckinghamshire, where I was going to look after some house property that had fallen to my share by my father's will, and as we parted from one another he made this remark, "Think what you like, Rab, about the Church and Dissent, but this is certain, that such plebeians as you and I have no chance of becoming gentlemen but by turning parsons. The Bishops are hard pushed just now, and are glad enough to encourage bold and desperate Dissenters in joining the Establishment." I could not but see the sound sense of this remark, and it had its impression on me in due time.

In the course of my journey I had to spend two or three days at Windsor, and there, one Sunday, curiosity led me to attend the service at St. George's Chapel Royal. My principal object was to see the King and Queen. The whole service greatly delighted and surprised me. The clergy looked amazingly smart in their white

sheets, with black silk round their necks, and red silk at their backs. The two rows of young gentlemen in white sheets singing prayers against one another on the opposite sides of the chapel produced a powerful effect; I never before had heard a confession of sins chanted, nor an absolution warbled; and I need not say how greatly I was delighted to hear the Apostle's creed in crotchets and quavers. The frequent repetition of the Pater Noster tended to impress on my attention that important formulary: when they had sung it five times I wished they would sing it five times more; *da capo* say I, in spite of the Dissenters. When the officiating priest gave out in a solemn chant "God save our most gracious Majesty King William the Sovereign, and all the knights commanders of the most honourable order of the garter," and when the whole choir responded "Amen," all my dissenting prejudices gave way, and I burst into a flood of tears. They were the tears of repentance, which never were fully wiped away but by the surplice of the vicarage of Tuddington.

The service, not like "the lazy worship of conventicles," was two long hours in performance, and was followed, after a due performance of minuets on the organ, by a sermon from the Bishop of ———. I never had heard such a sermon before; it was all on justification by good works,

against Calvinism, and in praise of a standing army. His text was from Romans v. 1. The right reverend prelate gave so sweet a metaphorical sense to the 17th article of the Church of England, and showed so clearly the necessity of introducing the allegorical mode of interpreting *all* the grace articles—he paid such pretty compliments to the Queen, and looked so well in his wig and lawn sleeves, that I acknowledged, long before the sermon was over, the sin and iniquity of dissenting from the Church of England. I now saw the beauty of order and of a State Church. The presence of their Majesties, the glittering show of the courtiers, the splendid uniforms of the guards, and the brocade of the maids of honour, seemed to me to fulfil this prophecy: “Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers;” and when I compared the pomp and grandeur before me with the paltry and plebeian worship of a Dissenting conventicle, I felt absolutely ashamed to think I was a schismatic. The parting words of my brother were in my ears during the whole sermon.

The only thing that discomposed me in this magnificent ritual was the frequent use of the opera glass by the ladies; they seemed to me to direct their attentions more to the guardsmen than to the bishop; but I doubt not that this arose from their anxiety to ascertain that these

brave men were wide awake, and ready to protect their Majesties in case of an attack upon the court by schismatics and radicals.

When I returned to the inn my first act was to take up the letters of L. S. E., which I did not put down till I had finished ; and when I had finished them, my next act was to stir up the fire, into the midst of which I consigned Dr. Watts's Hymn Book, with all the satisfaction that ever a Spanish Inquisitor experienced in baking a Protestant or roasting a Jew.

I made what haste I could home, and there, dear Sir, I must leave you to picture the interview between two brothers, both heretofore in the pit of schism, but now in the smiling pasturage of an Established Church. We mingled our tears, and rejoiced with such joy as is felt by those who have escaped from slavery. The rest of my story you know. By my brother's interest with our diocesan I was ordained a clergyman of the Establishment, and partly by your interest as an admirer of the letters of L. S. E., I am now vicar of Tuddington, where I hope to show my gratitude to the Church by rooting out dissent from my parish.

I am,
Reverend and dear Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

Vicarage, Tuddington.

LETTER III.

*The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

MY last letter gave you a short account of my parish, and the state in which I found it; I described, as it were, the field of battle; this despatch will give you an account of the battle itself.

I had hardly sealed my last letter, when, lo and behold! the Independent, Baptist, and Wesleyan teachers* came to pay me a visit. This is pretty familiar, † thinks I to myself, but I'll dissemble a little till I have you within shot of my great gun. The Independent teacher, Edward Mervyn by name, (for I cannot bear to call these fellows "Mister," and I would sooner be hanged than call them "Reverend,") was the spokesman of the party. He said they had come to congratulate me on my appointment to the vicarage of Tud-dington, and they hoped that my coming amongst them would be a blessing to *all denominations of*

* The Reverend Rabshakeh Gathercoal copies the excellent style of his brother, and never is found guilty of the gross error of allowing the Dissenting teachers to be ministers or pastors.

† The Gathercoal family are addicted to a sort of Doric dialect, which the Bishop of London particularly admires.

Christians in the parish. (The rascal said not a word about the Church as by law established.) I should find the parish, he assured me, in a very peaceable and friendly state, all questions about Church government were kept in the background; and though he supposed that members of other sects were as much attached to their discipline as he was to the discipline of his sect, yet it was generally agreed in the parish, to avoid all disputes on the subject, to discourse of them only amongst members of their own churches, and to study by all means to establish harmony and Christian concord amongst the whole body of believers. With this view they (*i. e.* Dissenters and Church people!) had interchange of prayer meetings and expositions of the Scripture, and they all subscribed to one another's Missionary funds. The late vicar, "good Mr. Thompson," promoted all plans of union, and never seemed happier than when the Dissenters and Church people were hand in hand in some kind office of love and charity. "The dear gentleman" made it a rule to preach a sermon on Christian love the first "Sabbath of every year," (N.B. Schismatics always nickname Sunday thus,) and it so happened that the last sermon he preached was from this text: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous." It was a sermon never to be forgotten by the inhabitants of Tuddington.

He then went on to say that I should find the Dissenters fully disposed to fall in with any measures of mine which might tend to the interests of our common faith, and that he was commissioned by his "Brothers" (*i. e.* all the teachers of schism in the parish) to assure me of the good will and respect of their people, as I should experience, he hoped, to my entire satisfaction.

Having said much more to the same purpose, it was at last incumbent on me to make some reply, and in doing so I took good care not to commit myself. I said I was glad to hear professions of respect to the clergyman of the parish, for though I personally put in no claim to respect, yet as the lawfully-constituted teacher of Tuddington I looked for such dutiful acknowledgments, and received them gladly. Peace and harmony *on a proper footing* was my earnest desire, and I doubted not that my endeavours to establish *order* would be crowned with success; for the present, however, I could only return my compliments to them for paying me this visit. I had hardly time to arrange anything, but next Sunday morning it was my intention to preach my "commencement" sermon, in which my views on some important points would be stated with clearness, and I hoped on that occasion they would do me the favour to attend and hear for themselves. This they readily promised, and as I did not ask them to sit down, nor show any disposition to continue the conver-

sation, they all withdrew. It was no little pleasure to me to bow them out of the house and shut the hall-door upon them. I do not expect soon again to see their "Reverences" under my roof.

This visit was on Monday. The day before a neighbouring clergyman had officiated for me, and I was busy all the week in writing my sermon, or, as I may say, priming the "monster mortar" which I intended to open upon them next "Sabbath." The Puritan camp has not felt such a shock since the days of Prince Rupert.

Dr. Birch, a clergyman of the right stamp, came by appointment from his rectory, six miles off, on Saturday. He slept at the vicarage, and, I assure you, he entered into my views with all the zeal imaginable. He had engaged the help of three other clergymen, besides his curate, so that we marched six in a row to church on Sunday morning, the clerk going before. As it was a gaudy day at Cambridge, the Doctor, to honor me, put on his scarlet robes, fur tippet and cap, and looked wonderfully well, I assure you, for his face was as red as his robes, and his portly person resembled much the pictures of Cardinal Wolsey. When we came to the church door the churchwardens met us at the porch, hat in hand, for I had arranged all this before; and thus, whilst the bells were firing salutes, and the organ playing "See the conquering Hero comes," we entered the church in grand style, which was

crammed from one end to the other, so that we could hardly reach the vicar's pew. They made a lane for us, however; and, as we walked through this great congregation, (upwards of two thousand persons,) it was evident we produced a wonderful effect. The people were all rising up in their pews to look at the procession.

Dr. Birch's chaplain read the service in cathedral style up to the Litany, for which he made way in favour of the Doctor, who went to a desk which I had ordered to be placed in the middle of the aisle, and there read "that excellent and pathetic specimen of the piety of our ancestors" with wonderful effect.

The Lessons would be wormwood to the schismatics, for the first was from the Apocrypha, which those vermin never read. It was the sixth chapter of Tobit, and I observed the Baptist Minister take a pinch of snuff and look very much vexed when the reader came to "broiling the fish's liver to drive away the devil." The second lesson was the Epistle of Jude, from which I had chosen my text. We gave them, also, the Athanasian Creed, introduced the churching of a woman, and chanted all the responses in the Communion Service.

Before sermon I gave standing, in the pulpit, the form of prayer appointed by the Canon, and then I fired off my monster mortar to this effect:—

Text. Jude 8.—"These filthy dreamers defile

the flesh, despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities."—I began with showing the true nature of Christ's Church, that it consisted of Archbishops, Bishops, Canons, Prebends, Vicars choral, Deans, Subdeacons, Archdeacons, Rural Deans, Subdeans, Rectors, Vicars, Perpetual Curates, and Curates, all which were appointed by our Lord himself, when he sent forth the seventy Ministers of his Church. The Apostles continued this form of Church government, consecrated Timothy Lord Bishop of Ephesus, James Lord Bishop of Jerusalem, &c. &c. &c. The blessed St. Paul instituted the support of the clergy by tithes, when he said, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple;" and if it was pious in the Jews to pay tithes and present offerings to their Priests, much more must it be pious in Christians, under a more glorious Ministry, to pay their tithes to "the delegated servants of Christ."

Having proved this at large by ample quotations from the Epistle of the blessed Ignatius to the Trallians, I concluded this part of my discourse thus:—"No mode, therefore, of Church government, except the Episcopal, and no mode of Ordination, except by a Bishop, have any claim whatever to the sanction of the Primitive Churches of Christ, or the Word of God, or any claim whatever upon the consciences or the obedience of Christians. As the Episcopal is the only form of

Government instituted by God, through the medium of his inspired Apostles, for the regulation of his Church, no other ought to be obeyed, or can be obeyed, without great wickedness."* (v. 175.)

I next showed how the Church of England existed, in a riddle, in the time of Moses; for as the great mark of the Church of England is the three orders, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, so were the three orders then established. "If we turn," said I, "to the Church of Christ, as it existed in the Old Testament economy, before his incarnation, we there find Christ did himself appoint three ranks of those who ministered in his Holy Temple, the High Priests, the Priests of the Second Order, and the Levites; and as he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, what was right in the Christian Church *then*, cannot be wrong *in the same Church now*." (138.)

Having thus proved that the Archbishop of Canterbury is the representative "and lawfully appointed successor" of Aaron, and that Aaron was type of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and himself Archbishop of the Diocese of Stony Arabia, I said, "I would hope that every Christian knows and believes that the Church of England, or, what is the same thing, the Church of Christ, has existed in every age of the world,

* N.B.—All these quotations are from the Letters of L. S. E., and the figures refer to the pages of the work. Second Edition.

from the days of Adam to the present moment, and that it will exist to the very end of the world, in spite of all the efforts of schismatics to destroy it. The gates of Hell, that is, the different paths of heresy and schism, which the Devil has opened to lead to Hell, shall never prevail against the Church. Adam and Eve, with Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David, Moses, Samuel, and all the Holy Patriarchs, Prophets, and holy men, of whom we read in the Old Testament, and thousands of others, during the period of the Jewish economy, belonged to *the true Christian Church*; i. e., the Church of England—they all died in the faith.” (142.)

I then showed the origin of Dissent. “The principles of Independency,” I said, “are the principles of depraved human nature, instilled into man, and fostered in him by his great enemy the Devil—the *first Dissenter*. It was with the promise of their being Independents, that he deceived our first parents, and brought death into the world and all our woe. ‘Ye shall be as Gods,’ says he, meaning they shall be *Independents*. And they believed him, and all their degenerate offspring have been imbued with the same principles of pride, dissent, and licentiousness, and beguiled by the same promise of the Devil in some way or other. ‘Ye shall be as Gods,’ says he to our modern Dissenters; and puffed up with the idea, they immediately respond, ‘We will be as

Gods'—we will enjoy full liberty of conscience—we will do as we please—no man has any right to exercise any authority over us—we will choose our own teachers.” (29.)

“The Devil, therefore, having made the first church of Congregational Independents, consisting of himself, Adam, and Eve,* it was quite natural that Cain, their first-born, should become a notorious Dissenter. He rejected the rites, institutions, and ordinances of the Church, would be worshipping to his own fancy, and, therefore, was an Independent. He was a thorough-paced Dissenter; and to show that he was ‘a Dissenter on principle,’ he murdered a Bishop of the Church of England—for such Abel was; and thus to show *their* principles, also, did the Independents murder Archbishop Laud, and send twelve Bishops to the Tower.

“Dissent made its appearance again in the battle of the four kings against five. Chedorlaomer King of Elam, Tidal King of Nations, Amraphel King of Shinar, and Arioch King of Ellasar, were all Dissenters and schismatics, for they were notorious enemies of Lot and Abra-

* The learned and pious Rabshekah has not here sufficiently explained his meaning; for as he had formerly said that Adam and Eve were members of the Church of England, it seems an inconsistency to pronounce them afterwards Congregational Independents. They probably came back to the Church before they died, signed the Thirty-nine Articles, and submitted to the true form of Church government, under the three orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; without which there never was, never is, nor ever can be, a true Church.—ED.

ham, the true sons of the Church. Of this there can be no doubt, for Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedek, and who are enemies of tithe-payers but the Dissenters? The four kings, therefore, were Congregational Independents.

“Again, we see the sin of schism in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (30.); their case was ‘the Case of the Dissenters.’” A whole congregation of Independents, Minister, Deacons, and people, were swallowed up on that memorable occasion: but, the warning, alas! goes for nothing with modern schismatics.

“‘The whole sin of dissent consists in exercising a right of conscience: it is all nonsense to talk about conscience and conscience: when a man begins to talk to me about his conscience, and say how conscientious he is, I *immediately* suspect him of having some sinister end in view. The judgment of the duly-authorized Minister of the Church is a far *safer guide than a man’s own conscience*; for in addition to that consciousness which they possess in common with private Christians, they have, in virtue of their office, Christ always present with, assisting and guiding them in their deliberations. (225, 226.) But heedless of these considerations, ‘the Dissenters, with all the spiritual pride imaginable, set up *conscience* and *private judgment*, or rather *perverted judgment*, above the commands and precepts of Christ, and all the word of God. Talk of the Pope and Popery!

Why every Dissenter carries a Pope about with him, and is himself thus as* *veritable* a Pope as ever existed. (351.) Drunkenness, adultery, robbery, and murder, and every species of iniquity and vice proceed from these infernal principles of licentiousness and libertinism, for which dissenting teachers contend, under the specious names of *liberty of conscience* and *liberalism*. (31.) Would the ‘canting schismatics,’ instead of listening to conscience, and taking the Scriptures as their guide, listen to the Bishops and Clergy, sin would soon disappear out of the world. For what sin is so great as disobeying the lawfully-constituted successors of the Apostles, who, as I said, always have and must have peculiar privileges with them to the end of the world? When, therefore, we see their Graces the Archbishops, and their Lordships the Bishops, voting against the Reform Bill, or amassing enormous private fortunes, or heaping benefices on their families, or, in short, doing anything else which ignorant people disapprove, we must hold our tongue, and not question the actions of the solemnly-consecrated and duly-appointed representatives of the Holy Apostles. ‘Should they, in short, do *anything* which we humbly think is not right, we as private Christians are not to judge them, but to leave them till the Lord, whose servants they are, calls them to give an account of their stewardship. No private

* A Doricism of the Gathercoal family.

Christian can take upon him to find fault with God's Ministers, without great arrogance, presumption, and pride. It ought to be concluded that as they have more learning, have had more experience, and have the presence of with them, they are far better capable of judging with respect to spiritual things than private Christians.' (217.) "Every true Christian, for the sake of union and the peace of God's Church, will submit himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. When he sees anything wrong, he ought to submit, rather than produce schism and discord: he had better be *a little uneasy himself*, than disobey those who have the rule over him.' (221.) 'Had the Church, indeed, twice as many evils as she appears to have to the jaundiced eyes of Dissenters, no one would be justified in separating from her.' (230.)

"Thus is it seen how 'spiritual pride is at the bottom of dissent,' (260.) for, indeed, 'Dissent altogether results from spiritual pride, and a self-righteous spirit;' (261.) 'not at the same time forgetting that a love of money is with the Teachers of schismatics the cause of their zeal,' (276.) whilst the people whom they teach have no other motive for their dissent than spiritual pride under the cloke of 'conscience.' If you ask me the secret of the wickedness of the schismatical Teachers in separating from the Church of Christ, 'and their deceit in dealing

with immortal souls,' I answer, 'the reason is, money, money, money, simply to get money,' (276.) for one thing is obvious, on a careful survey of these 'extempore praying schismatics,' (262.) that 'if a person attends a Dissenting Meeting-house, hires a pew, and pays the rent, and subscribes pretty freely to any scheme which has for its object the putting money into the pocket of the Teacher, in spite of all professions, consistency, and conscience, the pious Teacher will send him to Heaven, die when he may, and say a rare long Dissenting mass for him into the bargain. Professions here, or professions there: consistency here, or consistency there: tender consciences here, or tender consciences there: money, money, money, is the object: to get money they break their professions, abandon consistency, violate their consciences, and make Heaven itself an object of traffic.' (277.) 'And what right, I should like to know, have the Home Missionary Society to send their Preachers up and down the country, to creep into houses, leading captive silly women, and poor incautious men, under the loose pretence of preaching the Gospel, but in reality to propagate their own unscriptural and wicked notions, and thus to serve their own belly.' (321.)

I then showed how merciful it was in the state to *tolerate even the existence* of Dissenters in the country, "for Dissenters cannot reasonably expect to enjoy the immunities and privileges of a

society to which they, by their very dissent, avow they do not belong. And should the society, community, or state, relax their laws, as, upon certain conditions, to permit Dissenters even to dwell amongst them, it is a boon and an indulgence to which they have no manner of right, and for which, therefore, they ought to be exceedingly thankful." (280.) "A Dissenter can have neither a national nor an acquired right to anything that belongs to the Commonwealth of England." (282.)

This is of course but a sketch of the leading points of my discourse, which I concluded with a more close reference to the text. "The Apostle Jude, (I said,) here rightly calls Dissenters filthy dreamers; for Dissenters are like persons who having got dead drunk, fall asleep and dream of such filthy things 'as their tender consciences,' and 'the Scripture being the rule of faith.'"

"To despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities, is the substance of the great dissenting delusion, called by the blessed Jude "a dream;" because, in a dream, men do not make a right use of their reason. The dominion of Archbishops and Bishops, and the dignities of the great Prelates was established by the Author of our religion; he made them spiritual Barons, and the Apostles decreed, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, that they should be called "Graces," "Lords," "Most Reverend," "Right Reverend," and "Very Reverend." All the four Evangelists unanimously

declare that they should live in palaces, have precedence of barons, be settled in dioceses, hold spiritual courts, wear purple coats and aprons, have purple coaches, and purple footmen, sit in Parliament, and possess immense incomes. They are the oxen that tread out the corn, and their mouths must not be muzzled. Right reason consists in obeying, loving, and cherishing the Bishops and the Clergy: they that speak evil of them dream; therefore, Dissenters, schismatics, and sectarians of all grades, awake out of your dream! be filthy no longer! Come to the Church, submit to her ordinances, leave off your evil practices, repent of your iniquity; yea, awake, before the gulf opens, and ye be swallowed up in the fiery flaming fissure, with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their company. Amen.”

This letter is very long; I cannot add any more at present, except that I delivered the whole Sermon with a voice of thunder. The effect it produced you shall hear in my next.

Your loving Brother,

RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

LETTER IV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I CAN imagine your joy, my dear Brother, when you read my last letter, but I do not wait for an answer to give you my second despatch from head-quarters, for I know how impatient you must be to hear the result of my sermon. The effect of the morning service was throughout *perfect*. The schismatics (and I calculate that two-thirds of my congregation were of that sort) seemed perfectly astounded. I saw all the schismatical teachers in one pew together. The effect of our procession and of Doctor Birch's scarlet gown seemed so to discompose them, that they did not get into a tolerably listening posture for the first hour. In short, the whole congregation seemed stricken with astonishment, and every one looked as if he were ready to ask "What next?" But when I began my sermon their surprise seemed heightened into consternation, and all were in breathless silence, catching the words as they came from my lips. The schismatical teachers looked at one another in mute distress, and I perceived Mervyn the Independent wiping his eyes

repeatedly when I had got half through my sermon.

There is an old man in the parish, Othniel Prynne by name, but called familiarly by the people old Father Oddy. The old fellow says he is descended from the brother of that Prynne whose ears were most righteously cut off by the blessed Archbishop Laud. I know not whether the genealogy be correct, but Dr. Birch, who studies these matters, says it is, and old Oddy is mortally offended if any one doubts it. The old fellow seems to know the Scriptures by heart, for he never meets me without giving me a sermon made up all together of texts. He is, as you may suppose, a great oracle amongst the schismatics, and as he is now retired from his trade, which was that of a gardener, and as he is in comfortable circumstances, he seems to have little else to do but to preach and cant all day long. Oddy being somewhat deaf (for he is eighty-three years old) stationed himself directly in front of the pulpit, so that I fired all my red hot shot full into his trumpet. His large blue eyes and silver hair and aged face made a delightful mark for my guns, and by the gaping of his mouth I perceived that every discharge of my batteries took effect. When I finished my sermon I heard him audibly say, as if thinking aloud, "Lord have mercy upon us!"

After the sermon our party retired to the vestry.

Dr. Birch was ready to jump for joy. Stubbs, the orthodox churchwarden, a rosy-faced lover of the bottle, and of the "successors of the apostles," had prepared a glorious bumper of parish wine to refresh me after my labours.—"In the name of the parish of Tuddington," said this honest fellow, after all the clergy present were duly helped to a glass—"in the name of the parish of Tuddington, I drink the health of the Reverend Rabshakeh Gathercoal, and thank him for his excellent sermon; and as senior churchwarden I request him to print that noble discourse we have had the privilege to hear to-day."

"And I second the motion," shouted Dr. Birch, filling another bumper.

"Amen," responded the clergy, helping themselves to a second glass.

"My reverend brethren," said I, "and you, Mr. Churchwarden, I am highly flattered with your warm approbation of my sermon delivered this day. These are dangerous times we live in. The Church is hard pushed by those gaping bulls of Bashan the Dissenters; Church-rates are refused; Irish bishopricks are abolished; Church Reform is threatened; the bishops are pelted, and the nation is filled with pestilential publications against the 'faith once delivered to the saints;*' no man therefore who prays for the prosperity of

* This faith, in the doctrine of L. S. E., consists in a humble obedience to bishop, priest, and deacon.

Jerusalem can now refuse to come forward in the battles of righteousness, and to combat 'the wicked principles of Dissent, which have a direct tendency to destroy Christianity itself, and to abolish true religion from the face of the earth;'* I therefore shall comply with your request, and will send my sermon to the press to-morrow."

"Huzza!" shouted Dr. Birch, brimfull with joy, "Huzza! Mother Church for ever! Long live the noble vicar of Tuddington!"

My friends began now to show so much excitement, that I thought it prudent to bring our conference to an end; and it having been settled that Dr. Birch's curate should read the afternoon service without any sermon, we all adjourned to the vicarage to an orthodox dinner of roast beef, plum-pudding, and capons, to which, by particular desire of Dr. Birch, Churchwarden Stubbs was invited.—"He is an honest, merry fellow," whispered the doctor; "he hates the schismatics, and they hate him. There are not many such in your parish; you must encourage him."

The whole congregation had assembled in the churchyard, and were waiting to see us come out, though we had been a long time in the vestry. This was quite unexpected, and though they made way for us to pass to the vicarage, we had to walk through a brood of adders, if I may judge by the

* Letters of L. S. E. page 33.

hissing with which some of the lads and apprentices honoured us in our journey homewards. "Make way for the successors of the apostles," said a jackanapes in derision.—"Make way for Judas Iscariot!" shouted another.—"Fall down and worship the beast," said a third.—"Hats off to Dr. Babylon," was the insulting expression of a tall journeyman mason as Dr. Birch passed in his scarlet robe; and he made the boys take off their hats, "and show a proper respect to the Whore of Rome."

We got safe through this persecution; and as they did not pelt or jostle us, as I feared they would, we were not much the worse when we reached the vicarage. The doctor was in the highest spirits. "He was heartily glad that the blister had drawn; they had a doctor in the parish that knew how to cure the *Thompsonian* disease."

We dined early, as some of the party had to ride home many miles after dinner. Mr. Screw and Stubbs were the laymen, the rest of the party was clerical. I will not enter into details of our symposium; you may easily suppose that it was orthodox and refreshing. The clergy paid me very high compliments, and said that I was raised up to be the ruin of Dissent. Dr. Birch, full of glee, said he would give me a title, "*Schismatico-mastix*," or *the Scourge of the Dissenters*, which was much approved by my learned and reverend brothers, and my health was drunk in bumpers

with this new addition. I was somewhat perplexed what to do with Stubbs, for it must be confessed he got too much wine, and he had to traverse all the town before he could reach his house. There was, however, no helping it, so I sent him home in the evening in the care of my man John; but at the fishmonger's corner in the Market-place, where there is generally a collection of idle people, Stubbs fell down, and rolled into the gutter before they could fairly get him on his legs again, not without the laughter and ridicule of the spectators, who, when they saw Stubbs rolling home covered with mud, cried out "There goes Mr. Gatherdirt, prime minister of Mr. Gathercoal!"

Doctor Birch, as is too often the case with him, did not retire to rest in full possession of his masterly intellects. We had to put him to bed without much assistance from himself.

Thus ended this great day, and here I must conclude this letter.

Your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER V.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

ON Monday morning I was very anxious to learn the effect produced by my sermon. As soon, therefore, as breakfast was over, and Dr. Birch was fairly on his nag on his way home, I went into the town to Timson, the bookseller, whose shop is the bazaar of all our local politicians. I had, however, scarcely closed the iron gate of my front garden, when lo! and behold, up started Father Oddy from the stone bench, which is on the outer side of my wall. The old man is generally to be seen here every fine day enjoying the sunshine, and giving a Puritanical lecture to any one that will listen to him. On this occasion, however, I am sure he was watching me, for the weather was cloudy, and he pounced on me as soon as I had shut the gate. He had his staff in his hand, and he took off his old-fashioned broad-brimmed hat, as he always does when he speaks to me. "Put on your hat, Master Prynne," said I, "put on your hat; it does not suit grey hairs to be uncovered."—"If you were speaking of grey hairs, Mr. Vicar," began Oddy, with a most determined Conventicle aspect,—“if you were talking of grey hairs, the

Scripture telleth us in a certain place of an old man, who said, 'Ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave,' and you seem inclined, Sir, to try what you can do to bring me to my coffin; for if grief can kill a man, I might have received my death-blow yesterday. I have had many afflictions in my time, Master Vicar, but none like this, I assure you. All night long have I been tossing on my bed, without once closing mine eyes for grief, and for thinking of the mischief which has come upon us. Well-a-day! well-a-day! to think that good Mr. Thompson should have been so short a time in his grave, and that this sorrow should have come from *his* pulpit, where, for twenty years, there has been heard the Word of the truth of the Gospel, and the declaration of the great mystery of godliness to the consolation of many of Zion's pilgrims. Oh, Master Gathercoal, if you had said your lesson any where but in *that* pulpit—it's this which cuts my heart when I think of it; but, however, there is nothing certain in this world but death and sorrow, and I may say with the Psalmist, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.' Well, well! we are caught in a net, and are doubtless re-proved for our sins; and so the wild boar is sent to root up our vineyard, and the locust to consume our green fields. There is much wailing in Tuddington, Mr. Vicar; the saints are in tribulation;

and it would have been better for us that the old steeple-house should have fallen down than it should have witnessed yesterday's work. Aye, dear heart, it was enough to make our old Vicar rise up from his vault in the chancel to scare you all away, when you were braying at your Popish mummerly, like a company of Romish priests. It is a sad pity you don't conform to Rome at once; and if you *will* make such a din about 'schism' as you call it, why don't you lay aside the sin of schism yourself, and go back in a white sheet to do penance to the Pope, who considers you to be a Dissenter? I ken well enough, Mr. Vicar, that your steeple-house was built and endowed by Papists, and was meant for the mass; therefore, if you will talk so big about the *Church* and *Bishops*, how dare you, in your conscience, leave that Church and that Bishop from which your Church and your Bishops are as much sprung as a chicken is from the hen's egg? We schismatics, as you call us, deny all your trumpery doctrine of Bishops, Parsons, and Tithes; we know that they are the Devil's sowing in the good field—an enemy hath done this; but you who bluster about Apostolical succession, as you call it, cannot be allowed to rebel against the Bishops that made you, and the Church that reared you, and the Pope who made you what you are; so take care, Sir, that you don't go to join Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their company. You are playing

with edged tools, which will cut your fingers much deeper than ours.

“One would think by your sermon, Sir, that salvation of sinners is by faith in Bishops, and that we are redeemed by the parsons taking of tithe, such blasphemous stuff did you utter yesterday! Well, Sir, you and I must have very different Bibles; for, though I have been reading the Scriptures these seventy years, I never could find one word of what you have been kind enough to teach us. I suppose it is in the Greek, for certain it is not in the English. However, Mr. Thompson, who was judged to be a great scholar all the country round, seemed to read the Scripture as we simple folks do; and it is not a year ago since he preached a sermon on schism, from Hebrews, second chapter, twelfth verse: ‘I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee;’—and in that wholesome discourse he said that the Catholic Church was the company of all faithful believers, men and women, who hold Christ the head, are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. From this Church were excluded,—1. ‘All wicked and profane persons who die in their sins, and have no faith in Christ nor love to the Saints.’ 2. ‘All ignorant persons, into whose hearts God hath not shined, and who love the darkness of the natural man.’ 3. ‘All hypocritical self-justiciaries, who seek for righteous-

ness as it were by the works of the law.' 4. 'All idolators, or spiritual fornicators, who set up any will-worship of men's inventions, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men.' 5. 'All that worship the Beast set up by the Dragon, and that receive his mark in their hands or foreheads.' And I well remember that he said by these rules multitudes of Popes, Princes, Prelates, Clergy, and their votaries, men and women, greatly esteemed in the world, would enter into condemnation, and so be found in the day of judgment; and he made us very clearly to understand that he did not except some Protestant Bishops: for though he did not say so in the very words, we all knew his meaning"

To hear "good Mr. Thompson's" sermons was too much for my patience; so finding there was no way of escape, and that old Oddy seemed disposed to lecture me for a good hour, I walked away at a quick pace, and left him preaching to my stone wall.

After this to the bookseller's.—Timson was behind his counter, and the Independent and Baptist teachers were in the shop. They were not a little disconcerted by my appearance, and left the shop as soon as I entered it: no sign of recognition took place between us. I desired a private interview with Timson; he showed me into the room behind the shop, and there I began my business with him.

“Mr. Timson,” said I, “the clergy of this neighbourhood have expressed a desire to see my sermon of yesterday in print; I have acceded to the request, and have selected you as my printer and publisher.”—Timson coloured up to the roots of his hair on hearing this proposition, and replied very quickly, “You must excuse me, Mr. Gathercoal; I must decline the honour of printing your sermon.”—“Mr. Timson,” said I, “you surprise me! You printed Mr. Scrope’s Visitation Sermon last summer, and I saw it on your counter as I passed through the shop.”—“I could have no objection to print Mr. Scrope’s sermon,” answered Timson, “for there was nothing *particular* in that gentleman’s sermon.” “*Particular*, Mr. Timson, *particular!* pray, what may that word mean in your vocabulary?”—“Why, Sir, it means *not calculated to give offence*, and to stir up strife on subjects where we ought all to labour for peace.”—“Mr. Timson, I am sorry to hear such language from you—I thought you were a Churchman; I have been so informed, but perhaps the information has been erroneous.” Timson, who is somewhat warm in temper, grew red as a burning coal, and replied with a very rapid utterance, “Mr. Vicar, I believe I am as good a Churchman as you are; but I do not think it my duty, as a Churchman, to be an instrument of raising angry feelings in a town which has hitherto been remarkable for its peace

and quietness. The Dissenting Ministers here are all my personal friends; I am on very intimate terms with them, and though I am an Episcopalian, an unkind word has never yet passed between us. I have been a bookseller in Tuddington eighteen years, and all that time have been a constant attendant on the ministry of good Mr. Thompson. I have seen the blessed effects of Christian charity and mutual forbearance by the good precepts and example of your worthy predecessor, and sooner than print your sermon, I am bold to say, I would see my shop burnt down about my ears, and all my stock in trade destroyed. God forbid, Mr. Gathercoal, God forbid, that Nathaniel Timson's name should be seen on the title-page of the Sermon preached in St. Mary's church yesterday morning! I suppose it will be printed somewhere, and when it is printed there will be an end to the peace of Tuddington; but that firebrand shall never be lighted at my shop."

Here the good man took out his pocket handkerchief, wiped his forehead, blew his nose, fidgeted about, and buttoned up his coat to his very chin; and whilst I was thinking what to say, to allay this tempest, the shop-boy summoned him to attend Lady Lambert, who was sitting in her carriage, waiting to speak to him. Thinking this a good opportunity of withdrawing, I went from Timson to Serew's office. Serew was delighted

to see me ; he told me that my sermon had set all Tuddington in an uproar. The Dissenting Ministers had agreed to meet this evening together, to see what was to be done : “ But,” said he, “ they *can* do nothing ; you have them all under your feet, and, unless I am mistaken, you will soon ruin the dissenting interest in Tuddington, for it has been thriving hitherto, entirely by the lax principles of your predecessor, who never would preach about the Church of England, but was continually prosing about justification by faith, the election of grace, and all the cant of that party. People here never knew their duty, till Mr. Gathercoal taught it them ; and now we may be sure that fools will not be flocking to the schism shops, for want of some one to teach them the *right* road to salvation.”

Further particulars in my next.

LETTER VI.

*The Dissenting Ministers of Tuddington to the
Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL, Vicar.*

Tuesday.

“ REVEREND SIR,

“ WE whose names are undersigned heard you, last Sunday morning, preach a sermon in St. Mary’s Church, from Jude, 8th verse; and in consequence of that sermon, we venture to address you by letter, fearing that a personal interview might only increase the unhappy difference between us.

“ We deem it superfluous here to express our surprise and regret, caused by the sentiments of your Sermon. We presume you meant to surprise the parish, and therefore we say no more on the subject; but as we are willing to believe that you, Sir, are under the influence of a mistaken zeal, we are anxious to heal the breach which has been made, and to avert the evil consequences of your rash and ill-advised conduct. We do not wish to dictate any line of preaching to any clergyman, and we cannot object to the Vicar of Tuddington defending the Church government to which he is attached; but we beg you, Sir, to take into

consideration that *we* have not begun the strife ; we have never on any occasion spoken a disrespectful word against the Church of England ; we have never thwarted the clergyman of this or any neighbouring parish ; we have always enjoined our people to pursue a dutiful and respectful line of conduct towards the Vicar, and on all occasions have endeavoured to promote that union which your predecessor desired above all things. The good effects of mutual forbearance are open for all men's inspection ; and we boldly challenge a comparison of the town of Tuddington with any other town of England of the same size. We particularly advert to the sobriety and decent behaviour of the inhabitants ; the spirit of religious inquiry ; the education of the poor in Sunday and day schools, so that scarcely a child in the parish is not well taught ; the sums of money raised annually for local charities, and to support religious institutions ; the care and attention shown to the sick and infirm ; and other like proofs of a population advancing in Christian and intellectual culture. One would think that no gentleman, professing himself a Christian Minister, would wish to disturb such a town ; and if it be evident that the happy condition of Tuddington, as left on the death of the much-esteemed Mr. Thompson, is wholly owing to a free and kindly union between Church people and Dissenters, is it not, to say the least of it, a

very dangerous experiment to introduce a new system, which avowedly is hostile to the last degree to that already established, and cannot be admitted without violent opposition and strife?

“ We, therefore, beg you, Sir, attentively to consider the present state of the parish ; and we feel confident that when you shall have fully understood our actual position, you will not be so far misled by a theory, as to raise up a determined but hopeless opposition against a numerous body of people, disposed to be your friends and coadjutors in all matters where Christians of varied denominations *can* unite without sacrificing their principles.

“ Whatever the sin of dissent, Sir, may be in your eyes, you may rest assured that you cannot prevent or check it in the smallest degree : nay, we feel confident that a perseverance in the line of conduct threatened in your sermon will only increase the evil you deplore ; and will materially injure the interests of the Church of England for many miles round.

“ We, therefore, express our most anxious wish that your future line of conduct may be directed according to the dictates of Christian charity—or, if you please, of prudence and discretion ; and we, on our parts, profess ourselves quite ready to forget the sermon of last Sunday ; and, if we can see any

signs of forbearance on your part, to repress the unpleasant feelings of our respective congregations.

“ We are, Sir,

“ Your humble servants,

“ EDWARD MERVYN, Independent Minister.

“ JOHN TICKILL, Baptist Minister.

“ ELISHA DRANCE, Wesleyan Superintendent.

“ WILLIAM BOWLES, Wesleyan Minister.

“ WILLIAM STRINGER, Primitive Methodist.”

LETTER VII.

*The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL to the
Dissenting Ministers of Tuddington.*

Vicarage.

SIRS,

I HAVE received your letter, and am glad that it has been written, as it affords me an opportunity of declaring my intentions and opinions in so clear a manner as to make any further correspondence between us unnecessary: You will please, however, to take notice that by answering this letter I do not recognise your assumed characters of ministers, for as there is no order of ministers but that which was appointed by our Lord, and has come down to our days in an unbroken line of succession from the apostolical times, it would be sinful in me to recognise any leaders of schism as Christian Ministers or Pastors.

The sermon which you heard on Sunday morning last in the Church of the blessed Saint Mary is to be considered as the irrevocable declaration of that Gospel which I have been appointed to preach by his Grace the Archbishop of York by laying on of the hands of the Presbytery according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England; and you may depend upon it that I never will, in the

smallest degree, relax from those principles, on which I am persuaded depends the salvation of immortal souls. My sermon will be published in a few days, and by that sermon I intend to direct all my actions in my government of the people put under my care by apostolical commission and the laws of the land. If I did not know the judicial blindness always attending the schismatical delusion, I would conjure you, now that the true Church of Christ has been faithfully explained in your hearing, to shut up your conventicles, and to seek as penitent sinners pardon for your wickedness by humbly submitting yourselves to "the delegated authority of the Head of the Church*," for you must in your consciences be fully aware that your conventicles "have not the slightest pretence to be considered Churches," for as "the episcopal is the only form of government instituted by God through the medium of his inspired apostles for the regulation of his Church, no other ought to be obeyed or can be obeyed without great wickedness: obedience to any other amounts in fact to the rejection of Christ, as King and Head of the Church; and I am at a loss to imagine what claim persons who will not submit to that particular mode of government and discipline laid down by the Saviour can have to the title of Christians. A Christian is one who bows to the authority, institutions, and commands of

* L. S. E. p. 187.

Christ, and he who does not do so cannot be a Christian. Church discipline cannot be settled according to the wild notions and vagaries of any hot-headed fanatical pretender to inspiration, having nothing in view but his own selfish ends*." But the true authority which "Christ committed to his apostles has been transmitted down from one bishop to another in regular succession to the present time; and the clergy of the apostolical Church of England, having received their authority in this way—in a direct line of succession from Christ, the fountain of all authority to his Church, they are the only legitimate and authorised ministers amongst us, and he who despiseth them despiseth Christ, and he who despiseth Christ despiseth Him that sent him†."

"Truth therefore constrains me to tell you that you are not ministers of the Gospel, but ministers of heresy and schism—you are not the servants of Christ chosen by him, but the servants and hirelings of your hearers, chosen and paid by them—you have received no commission or authority from Christ, but from your people, who scripturally have none to give, and you are equally wicked as they for submitting to mob government, in direct opposition to truth, in direct opposition to reason, and in direct opposition to the dictates of your conscience‡;" in short, you are "a club of unordained ministers, a union of ignorant,

* L. S. E. p. 175. † Ib. p. 176. ‡ Ib. p. 186.

upstart religious *funguses**,” who have “presumed to dethrone Christ, and snatch the crown from his head †.”

Such, therefore, being the dreadful state of sin in which your rebellious principles have plunged you, I conjure you to see yourselves as you really are, “false prophets, and false teachers, wolves in sheep’s clothing, but still wolves by nature, for though you may have put on the appearance of being very pious and holy men, and may have transformed yourselves into ministers of righteousness, and made such pretensions to deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect, yet still you are ministers of Satan,” “and are under the heavy curse of God ‡.”

I have endeavoured to be explicit in this letter ; if, however, any thing further is wanting to make you understand my views, I desire you to take notice that I shall lay the axe to the root of the tree of Dissent, hew it down, and cast it into the fire. Whatever opposition you may make to my “delegated authority,” I shall be able to crush it, and though it may make some stir in an ill-managed, ill-governed town, yet it will be but the writhings of a patient losing a mortified limb.

Your appointed Superior and Pastor,
RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

* L. S. E., p. 187. † Ib. p. 187. ‡ Ib. pp. 184, 185.

LETTER VIII.

From the Reverend AUGUSTUS O'NEIL, Catholic Priest of Tuddington, to the Reverend RAB-SHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just finished reading your sermon on Jude, 8th verse, which you have printed and published, and I hope you will not be offended at my offering some few remarks thereon for your consideration.

You are, I perceive, on the confines of the truth, and may, I trust, be finally led to the only means of salvation of which you seem to have some glimpses. You are quite right in your doctrine concerning the true Church of Christ, and have well said that there is none other Church than that which is in obedience to episcopal government, as it was first instituted by Christ himself, and as it has come down to our days in an unbroken line of succession. I am, however, somewhat surprised to find you winking at the evident and unavoidable deduction from this argument, that as this line of episcopal succession has come down through the holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, and as all the archbishops of

England before the unhappy times of Luther's reformation received the pall from the Popes, swore fealty to him, and were his servants and children, so it must be manifest that your Church has fallen into schism by dissenting from the Church of Rome, to which exclusively you owe your existence.

I agree with you also in your eloquent and indignant denunciations against a free use of conscience, and I cannot too much applaud this golden sentence of your sermon, "the judgment of the *duly authorized* minister of the Church is a far safer guide than a man's conscience;" for, as you say, all schism has arisen and must arise from the audacity of private individuals presuming to interpret the Scriptures according to their conscience, a licence which has been constantly resisted by the Catholic Church, as contrary to that submission due to the only lawful interpreters. "The Catholic Christian," says the Bishop of Meaux, "forms not his faith by reading the Scriptures; his faith is always formed before he begins to read; reading only serves to confirm what he before believed, that is, to confirm the doctrine which the Church had delivered to him." (Conférence avec M. Claude, p. 330.)

But on the most important point of debate between us, I must not omit to remark that, according to the grounds of the Protestant Episcopalians themselves, they can neither pretend personal

succession of bishops nor succession of doctrine. For since a succession of bishops signifies a never-interrupted line of persons endued with an indelible quality which divines call *a character*, and which cannot be taken away by deposition or degradation—and since they are in this character endued with authority to teach, preach, and govern the Church, by laws, precepts, and censures, Protestants cannot pretend succession to either of these. For besides that there never was a Protestant bishop before the schism of Luther, and that there can be no continuance of succession where there is no beginning to succeed, they commonly acknowledge no *character*, and consequently must affirm that, when their pretended bishops or priests are deprived of jurisdiction or degraded, they remain merely lay persons as before their jurisdiction, fulfilling what Tertullian says of heretics, “to-day a priest, and to-morrow a layman.” Now this is evidently matter of fact, history, and law; for we know that an act of parliament could totally destroy a Protestant bishop or priest’s character, and utterly deprive him of all his jurisdiction and ephemeral authority. Thus in the reign of Edward VI., the first Protestant head of your church, and the first maker of any genuine Protestant bishop, the patents for episcopal authority contained this clause, “So long as they shall behave themselves properly,” *quamdiu*

se bene gesserint; by which very clause Queen Mary most properly ousted these mushroom bishops. And in the reign of William III. nearly half the bench of bishops were ousted and turned into laymen, for refusing to abjure King James. From these ousted prelates sprang the sect of Nonjurors, a sect that existed not very long ago; for such is the perplexed and disordered state of your Church, and so weak are its foundations, that members of the Church of England were on this question divided into two parties; the majority holding that the king and the law make and unmake bishops,—the minority, that bishops are made by divine authority, and that nothing but the same authority, manifest in the stroke of death, can unmake them. This minority constituted the sect of Nonjurors, who, by the strange position of a bad-constituted Church, were thus turned into Dissenters for adhering to a principle which is right in the abstract. Such perplexities as these can never arise in the Roman Catholic Church.

No one will venture to deny, for it is a matter of history, that your first bishops were made by authority of the Pope, and derived their jurisdiction immediately from him; and it is a well-known fact, that Cranmer, your first Protestant Archbishop, (if, indeed, he can be called a Protestant, seeing he recanted the Protestant heresies before he died,) was not only consecrated in the

Papal way, swore obedience to the Pope, and was elevated to the throne of Canterbury by *ten** Bulls from the Roman Chancery, but did himself ordain† priests and deacons in the rites of the Roman Church, with chrism, incense, bowing, ringing of bell, and holy water, and all other proper ceremonies, according to the ritual prescribed by the Popes. How, then, can he, your first Protestant Archbishop, be any thing less than a schismatic, when he dissented from the Church of Rome, unless you can show that he had authority from the Pope to oppose the Roman Church? and how can the subsequent Protestant bishops claim any thing more than a schismatical consecration? Your bishops, therefore, are no bishops, but ringleaders and teachers of schism, as much as any preachers amongst the Independents or Baptists.

But you will say, perhaps, that Cranmer, at his consecration, first protested that he would not

* First Bull was directed to the King; second, to Cranmer; third, a Bull of Absolution to Cranmer; fourth, to the Suffragans of Canterbury; fifth, to the City and Diocese of Canterbury; sixth, to the Chapter; seventh, to the Vassals of the Church; eighth, conferring the Pall; ninth, the Destination of the Pall; tenth, to the People of Canterbury.

† By the Bull of the *Destination of the Pall*, it seems that Cranmer's pall came from Rome, *de corpore B. Petri*, "from the body of the blessed Peter." What this means I know not, unless it had been placed first on the body of the great image of Peter, or on the body of the Pope himself, who sometimes, in ecclesiastical language, is called Peter.—ED.

obey the Pope beyond what the Scriptures authorised. This is, indeed, one of the darkest parts of the character of that unfortunate Prelate; for if this secret protestation and reservation be admitted, there is an end of truth on the face of the earth, and perjury becomes a holy thing. Cranmer, therefore, in first protesting, and then swearing obedience to the Pope, committed an enormous sin, which even honest Protestants have condemned. But supposing it were no sin, what would you say to a Protestant bishop, who having been consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, according to the rite of your Prayer Book, should, after his consecration, set up a new Church, with a new Prayer Book, and a new form of government, and new Articles of Belief—and not content with this, should himself consecrate other bishops to perpetuate the schism—and when reproved for his perjury and wickedness, should answer that he was persuaded in his *conscience* that a great reform was requisite, and that his views were according to Scripture, and that he had at his consecration first protested that all his oaths of obedience to the King, as Supreme Head, and to the Metropolitan See of Canterbury, were not in any way to be interpreted as binding him to that which the Scripture did not warrant? Would you not say that this man was not only a schismatic, and a ringleader of schism, but also a perjured liar and a scoundrel? and would you not

most justly condemn all his Church, to the latest generation, as guilty of rebellion and schism?

This is your case, and this is your sin, Sir, as long as you cleave to the schismatical Church of which you are a teacher.

Having, therefore, by an unlawful schism rejected the authority of that head of the Church, to whom Christ himself gave the power of the keys, and delegated all the pastoral care—and having rebelled against the successors of the blessed Apostle Peter, whom for fifteen centuries the whole Christian Church revered and obeyed—you have now set up that anomaly of human invention, a lay-head of the Church of Christ in the person of your King; for which fancy it would, indeed, be a vain thing to seek for any warrant in the Scriptures, the boasted foundation of the Church of England.

Now, of this monster—a lay-head of a clerical body—I first notice that he is called *Defender of the Faith*; and from whom, I pray you, got he that title? Was it not from Pope Leo X.? and was not that title given to Henry VIII., then a Roman Catholic Prince, to reward him for having written against the Lutheran schism, by which very schism your Kings and Queens have ventured now to declare themselves heads of the Church? And yet what a prodigy is this head of your Church! for it seems he has power to con-

vey to others the power of doing those things which he cannot do himself, and confers attributes which he himself does not profess. This is, indeed, a monster in the moral and physical world, which required the wits of Edward VI., or of some of his father's schismatical bishops to invent; for the head of your Church can neither himself consecrate, nor bless, nor excommunicate, nor administer the Sacraments, nor pray, nor preach, nor absolve from sin, though he can give authority to others to do these things! Whence derived he this nondescript power of transmitting from himself a virtue which he himself possesses not? and how comes it, that though he can do none of these things himself, yet he could any day curtail, alter, erase, or add to any extent that book on which all your religion depends, the Prayer Book of the Church of England? The head of your Church, King George IV., forbade the Church of Christ to pray for his wife. Whence got he that tremendous power of silencing *the faithful, the Lord's chosen people*, as you call yourselves in your Prayer Book? Who endowed him with this authority of thus arresting the devotions of the Church of Christ? What Scripture can you show for this strange and ungodly dominion of a laic in things spiritual? or how can you prove, by the New Testament, that the head of your Church, not being himself a bishop, can ordain the conse-

cration of bishops, and that the very existence of your pretended priesthood rests on his will and pleasure ?

Consider, moreover, what a strange creature is one of your bishops. The King cannot of himself make a bishop, nor the bishops of themselves, but the temporal magistrate must unite with the spiritual pastor to confer the episcopal dignity ! And when a bishop is thus made by the united efforts of the temporal magistrate and the spiritual body, he can any day be unmade by an Act of Parliament ! And all this is Scriptural ! and this you call your Apostolical Church ! Oh, Sir, what absurdities and impieties are you compelled to admit, in your vain endeavours to give a plausible appearance to your schism ! Let me, therefore, beseech you patiently to investigate the testimony of the Fathers, and that unbroken line of tradition, whereby it is most clearly seen that the Catholic, or Universal Church has always, from the first, obeyed the successors of St. Peter, and submitted to the authority of the See of Rome. I am glad, however, to find by your sermon, by the Oxford Tracts, and the British Magazine, that the English Clergy are beginning to quote the Fathers and Councils against the Puritans ; for there is good ground of hope, that, when these venerable sources of information shall be duly examined, the Protestant Episcopalians will themselves see their own error, and be led to acknow

ledge the weak foundations of their heterogeneous system, which has all the sinfulness of the Puritanical delusion without any of its simplicity.

We are not without a warm expectation of some great change in this way: Mr. Spencer's conversion is prominent amongst some others of less importance, and many signs of a leaning to the true Church are visible in many quarters. That the Bishop of London should have recommended the letters of L. S. E. is in itself a good sign of a more healthy tone of mind amongst your leading Clergy: for those letters bear ample testimony against the right of private judgment, and the exercise of conscience in things spiritual; and declare uncompromising war against the doctrines of the Reformers and all the Puritans. When Protestant Episcopalians leave the Scripture, and refer to tradition and the authority of the Fathers, there is every reason to anticipate a happy result; and to hope that as they have put themselves into the regions of the true light, they will at last find the road of truth.

In conclusion, Sir, let me assure you that the suffrages of the faithful in these parts shall be especially engaged for your conversion; and humbly do I pray that Our Lady and the blessed Peter and Paul and Cosmo and Damian, and all the company of Saints, may effectually intercede for the salvation of your soul; and that those seeds of

truth which I hope are sown in your mind may be matured into the vigour of Evangelical faithfulness.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere well-wisher and friend,

AUGUSTUS O'NEIL.

LETTER IX.

*The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL to the
Reverend AUGUSTUS O'NEIL.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

IT is a pleasure to correspond with a clergyman who, though unfortunately not in communion with the Church of England, has undeniable claims to respect in his clerical character, and whose ordination has been by laying on of hands by the Bishops, the undoubted successors of the Apostles. Our Church acknowledges your ordination as valid: it is, therefore, my duty, as well as my pleasure, to address you as a clergyman, and to reply with candour to your well-intentioned letter. The error of your argument is to be found in the idea that the Church of England was not established before the days of Augustine, "and, indeed, it is too generally thought that the Church of England had no existence in this country previously to the time of Augustine, whom Gregory the Great, then Pope of Rome, sent into this country to propagate the Christian faith."* And this idea forms the basis of your argument used in support of the notion, that the Roman Catholic

* Letters of L. S. E.

religion was the first form of the Christian religion introduced into this country; and that at the glorious Reformation the Church of England separated or dissented from the Church of Rome. "But all this is as far from the truth as the poles from each other; for the Church of England existed in Britain hundreds of years before St. Augustine set his foot in this country. Every one knows that Pelagius, the father of the Pelagian heresy, was a native of Britain, and lived two hundred years before the arrival of the Popish missionary. Hume, the great historian, when introducing the mission of Augustine to the idolatrous Saxons, says, 'that the constant hostilities which the Saxons maintained against the Britons would naturally indispose them for receiving the Christian faith, when preached to them by such inveterate enemies; and perhaps the Britons, as is objected to them by Gildas and Bede, were not over fond of communicating to their cruel invaders the doctrine of eternal life and salvation!' Hume also mentions a battle which 'was fought at Chester between the Saxons and the native Britons, at which were present *twelve hundred monks*, and fifty British monks from a large monastery at Bangor, which contained no less than 2100, who there maintained themselves by their own labour. Thus it is evident that the Church of England existed in Britain long before the times of Saint Augustine, entirely independent of the See of

Rome.' You, therefore, will perceive that our pious and venerable Reformers, in whom churchmen so justly glory, were not, as Dissenters diligently endeavour to inculcate, the *founders*, but the *Reformers*, the purifiers of the Church. SHE WAS THE VERY SAME CHURCH AFTER THE REFORMATION AS SHE WAS BEFORE; just as a man is the very same person after he has washed his face as he was before. The Reformers merely cleared away the rubbish of Popery which was obstructing her utility, and obscuring her glory, and restored her to her pristine purity and perfection; and thus left her to us, their children, a RICH and glorious inheritance. As our Church is constituted according to the Apostolic model, and as our Bishops and Clergy have been regularly and properly ordained by the laying on of the hands of those who received their commission and authority in a direct and unbroken line of succession from the Apostles and our Lord, she is a true branch of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church; for there is not a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon amongst us, who cannot, *if he please*, trace his own *spiritual descent* from Saint Peter and Saint Paul*." These remarks I think a sufficient reply to your letter, and subscribe myself,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

* Letters of L. S. E., p. 98—100.

LETTER X.

*The Reverend AUGUSTUS O'NEIL to the
Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.*

DEAR SIR,

YOUR answer to my letter is as little satisfactory to me, as I am persuaded it must be to yourself; for what, after all, is your reply to my arguments?—That the Church of England existed in Britain before the mission of Augustine; and that afterwards, being freed from the additions to Popery, “she was the very same Church after the Reformation she was before.”

Had I not been acquainted with the fact that some of your Clergy, to avoid the charge of schism, have had recourse to this preposterous theory, I should not easily have credited that men of character would have ventured on such a mode of defence. It certainly proves one thing, that they suppose the public to be sunk in excessive ignorance and credulity, otherwise they would not have hazarded so desperate a fable.

If, however, your present Established Church existed before the mission of Augustine, where, I pray you, was your Prayer Book; and where your Thirty-nine Articles; your homilies; your temporal

head of the Church ; your tithes ; and your Parliamentary Prelates ? If all these things were taken away, the Church of England would be taken away ; but who will be so hardy as to say that any one of these things existed amongst the British tribes, before the mission of Augustine ? Is not a very important part of your Prayer Book translated from the Roman missal and breviary ? Were the missal and breviary in use amongst the Britons ? If you answer *yes*, then it is clear that they were Roman Catholics : if you answer *no*, then it is clear that your Prayer Book is not derived from your British Churches, but from the manufactory of Rome. By either answer you are in a dilemma ; either your British Churches were Roman Catholic, and you are schismatics for departing from *their* faith, or you are schismatics for dissenting from the Church of Rome.

I observe, however, that you furnish me with abundant proof that the British Church then existing was not what your Established Church now is ; for you tell me, that, in these primitive days of your establishment, long before the coming of Augustine, there were 2100 monks in a monastery at Bangor ! Where are these monks in *your* Church now ? What has the Bishop of Bangor done with them ? What ! had your Church ever monasteries and monks and nuns, and that long before Popery came to the island ? Truly this is a droll proof furnished by yourself of the existence of your

Protestant religion ! Give us back then our two thousand monks, and I will let you retain your Thirty-nine Articles.

Let me, however, remind you that in the Pelagian controversy, to which you refer, in this imaginary era of your fabled Church, the British bishops invoked the aid of the French bishops to settle the differences which that controversy originated ; and that in consequence Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, *with the concurrence of Pope Celestine*, twice visited Britain ; once in 429, in company with Lupus of Troyes, and again in 446 with Severus of Treves, and succeeded in putting an end to the controversy. Here we have foreign Bishops coming to Britain *with the concurrence of a Pope*, to settle religious disputes, and that too in Protestant days ; according to your agreeable theory, many years before Popery had been known in the island !

Who, moreover, I ask you, was the first Archbishop of Canterbury ? Was it not this very Augustine, a Popish Missionary from Pope Gregory the Great, who, by the Pope's desire, received Archiepiscopal consecration for Canterbury from the Archbishop of Arles ? So, though any of your parsons may, according to your assertion, trace, "if they please," their spiritual descent from Peter or Paul, yet assuredly this descent must come through Augustine and the Archbishop of Arles, and thus approach much

nearer the Roman Chancery than would suit your theory.

There is, however, no doubt at all that the *Roman Catholic religion* existed in Britain before the mission of Augustine, whose mission was to the Saxons, and not to the Britons, in this island. The Britons were Catholics, the Saxons, for the most part, Heathens, and to the Heathens did Gregory send a mission, which was eminently successful. In fact, there was a meeting between the British Bishops and these missionaries, and the only points in dispute between them were the proper day for keeping Easter, and the proper mode of administering Baptism—an abundant proof that the two parties considered themselves essentially of the same religion. The fact that Augustine required the British Bishops to assist him in converting the Saxons, which they refused to do, is another proof that this “Popish Missionary” considered the British Churches Catholic; for most certainly he never would have invited clergymen of your Church to help him in the task.

I deem it, however, unnecessary to fight any more against your phantom, and therefore must dismiss the subject, requesting you to peruse a little tract (enclosed with this letter), in which I have endeavoured to show, in a clear and popular manner, that our Lord appointed Peter head of the Church, and that the Bishops of Rome are the successors of Peter’s authority.

This tract I shall distribute largely in Tuddington; for as you have preached and published on the question of Apostolical succession, I think it right that the good people of this town should know *the whole truth* connected with this important subject.

Your faithful Servant,

AUGUSTUS O'NEIL.

[Here the correspondence between the Vicar and the Catholic Priest seems to have terminated, for I cannot find that Rabshakeh ever wrote a reply to the letter No. X. There is, however, on the back of this letter a short sentence, in pencil, in the Vicar's handwriting, which may perhaps account for this silence, "N. B.—It is easier to abuse the Dissenters than to answer the Catholics."—In fact, this great Divine had a very great respect for the Roman Catholics, and always wished to be on good terms with them —Ed.]

LETTER XI.

*From the Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.*

DEAR BROTHER,

THE battle is raging in Tuddington ; it begins to be very hot work, and I must expect my buffets and blows, according to the lot of war. My sermon, which Dr. Birch calls my golden sermon, and which he says entitles me to the honourable name of Chrysostom, or "*golden mouth*," I sent to be printed in London—a large edition of 1500 copies, which I have distributed *gratis*—for that obstinate fellow Timson will have nothing to do with it. It is, however, to be purchased at the brandy vaults of my prime minister Stubbs, and the neighbouring clergy have sent for it by dozens.

It is not to be supposed that I have remained silent after my first song ; I assure you I have followed up the "golden sermon" with repeated blows of the same sort, always preaching the Gospel from L. S. E., the best expositor of the truth I can anywhere find. Last Sunday I preached on the subject of Death on the Pale Horse, which I proved was the system of dissent "killing the fourth part of the earth with

beasts." The beasts I showed were the various forms of schism ; and so having noticed various beasts, I came to foxes and other vermin, and declared how, in Canticles, " the little foxes that spoil our grapes " were the Dissenters nibbling at our tithes. Then apostrophising the whole body of schismatics I said, " You hate *tithes* I know, probably for the same reason for which the fox disliked the grapes ; but you would be glad of the *tenth* of the tithe of such decisive evidence in support of your unscriptural system, as we can show for Episcopal authority.* I have shown, beyond the power of contradiction, that no such system as that you advocate has any foundation in the word of God. You may, indeed, *just as easily* prove from the Holy Scriptures, that all the metamorphoses, or all the nonsensical fables of the Heathen Mythologies are true, as your new fancied system of Dissent." (L. S. E. pp. 174.)

The schismatics, of course, are furious, and have bestirred themselves to let me know that wasps can sting. The first annoyance I have experienced is in the diminution of the congregations ; last Sunday Stubbs counted only 200, which looked a small company in our large church. I am, however, going to preach a sermon against

* The wit of the Gathercoal family is of the most refined order; the Bishop of London pronounces it to be pure Attic salt.

the sin of not coming to church, and I intend to make no small stir on this head. They have, however, vexed me far more by sending for balcs of Beverley's pamphlets, not one of which had ever yet been read in my parish. I have, however, scen them in many of the cottages within the last few days, and much mischief, I fear, will be done in consequence. They tell me that a rich Dissenter of London has sent 500 of each of these pamphlets to the Baptist teacher, who sells them for 2*d.*, and that the greater part are sold already! Will no one crush this noxious writer? He it was that began the mischief, but who shall say where it is to stop? We live in evil days, dear Brother.

The teachers of schism have further agreed, according to what I hear, to deliver each a course of lectures in their chapels in defence of schism. The first lecture will be delivered at the conventicle of the Independent Sectarians next Wednesday evening; and when Mervyn has finished his lectures, which are to be four in number, the Baptist teacher is to glean any remnants of iniquity let fall from the bosom of his "dear Brother," so that nothing may be lost to the Devil's harvest.

Dear Mr. Screw tells me that his notices of taking all tithe, to the last farthing, of the gardeners, and of all others in the parish, have put the town in a still greater ferment. Here, how-

ever, I am sure of victory, and the more yells the beasts set up the better. I will sell every bed and table in Tuddington sooner than give up a sixpennyworth of my rights. I owe this to my "successors," and to the Apostolical church of which I am an unworthy priest. "Muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn."

As for more private concerns, the thorn in the flesh is not removed, nor likely to be ; Jane* continues as obstinate as ever. She has told me point blank, that she finds my sermons so little profitable to her soul, and the Church service so tedious and objectionable, that she cannot go to church any more. She says, however, that she has no inclination to frequent any of the chapels in Tuddington, for she dreads hearing controversial sermons, in which it is very probable I may be mentioned with no great respect ; and besides, she wishes, *as long as possible*, to keep up appearances in the eyes of the parish. I have put into her hands all the sound books I can think

* Mrs. Gathercoal, here first mentioned, was a Dissenter when she married Rabshakeh ; her parents were Baptists, and she herself an attendant at the Baptist chapel at Leeds. Rabshakeh himself was a nominal Independent at the time of their marriage.

These great men, L. S. E. and his brother, seem each to have had the same domestic affliction, for we read in the Letters of L. S. E., p. 185, the following melancholy sentence : "When it is considered that those who are *nearest* and *dearest* to me upon earth are at this moment Dissenters, it must be supposed that my own feelings are in no trifling degree interested."—ED.

of—first, the Letters of L. S. E., then Southey's Book of the Church, Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, and the warmest tracts of the Christian Knowledge Society, besides various others recommended by friends—but she seems to me a more rigorous Dissenter after reading works written in defence of our Scriptural church than she was before; indeed, she begs me to torment her no more with the Church controversy, for she assures me she knows all the Episcopalian arguments perfectly, and that all the libraries in the world never can persuade her that the Church of England is the Church of Christians seen in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any part of the New Testament. To do her justice, I do not believe she has ever read any of the Dissenters' books on Church Government; the Bible is her library in this controversy, and whenever we argue on these subjects, she quotes the Scriptures and nothing else. I never can get her to listen to the evidence of the Fathers and tradition; she turns a deaf ear to all my rhetoric when I read to her passages from Ignatius and Ambrose.

Here, however, is the weak part of my fortress. When I see Jane looking cold or melancholy in the midst of my zeal, it makes me furious, and I say and do things in my wrath which I am sorry for afterwards; particularly when I see she has been weeping in private, for she never sheds a tear before me, and is silent and submissive in the

midst of our disagreements. I am fearful that sooner or later she will join the Baptists, and be baptized in their way. I have told her that if she ever should take this step I will shut my doors against her, and send her and her child back to her parents. She gives me no answer, and by this silence I dread the worst. So you see, my dear brother, I have much to perplex me.

I have received a flattering letter from the Bishop of L——, thanking me for my “golden” sermon; he styles me “a pillar of the Church;” this letter is going the round of the neighbouring clergy, and its contents are so well known, that the schismatics here have printed handbills, pretending to give a correct copy of the letter, but changing the word *pillar* into *caterpillar*. Thus you see the malice of these rascals!

In my next I hope to give you some account of Mervyn’s Lecture on Dissent. Screw has promised me an exact transcript of all the fellow will say by sending to the chapel one of his clerks, who can take the whole lecture down in short handwriting.

Your affectionate Brother,

RAB.

LETTER XII.

From MRS. THOMPSON *to the Reverend* RAB-
SHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

REVEREND SIR,

THE subject matter of my letter must be my apology for writing to you with whom I have not the honour to be personally acquainted ; and if I express myself in very plain language without the help of that eloquence of which my case stands much in need, I trust I shall find the deficiency of my letter, in regard to proper arguments, made up by the kind and merciful disposition of your own heart.

I am the widow of the late Vicar of Tuddington, to whom I bore nine children, the eldest being nearly eightecn, and the youngest an infant at the breast. To educate and support so large a family on 550*l.* a-year, which was the utmost we ever had by uniting the proceeds of the vicarage to my own little fortune, required the utmost economy and management ; and when you take into consideration also my dear husband's liberal care of the poor and subscription to religious institutions, I trust we may be freed from all charge of extravagance ; for though we always were able to show

proper hospitality to a friend, I am happy to say that, *with one exception*, all debts are paid, and that my husband died *creditor* and not *debtor* to his parish.

My eldest boy, nearly eighteen years old, is, in the eyes of his perhaps doating mother, a very promising youth, and likely to do credit to the education bestowed on him by his dear father. Friends who are capable of judging pronounce him a superior Greek and Latin scholar, with considerable mathematical acquirements. That he is pleasing and gentlemanly in his manners, kind, obliging, and affectionate in his disposition, and a most dutiful son, I must be allowed myself to testify. My husband was extremely anxious that this son (whose Christian names are John Calvin) should take a degree at the university of Cambridge, and afterwards proceed as a candidate to holy orders. For this we have all been looking, and for this purpose out of our small income have been able to lay aside 500*l.*, which, though little enough for a University education, would I believe be increased by the kindness of a friend, one of the Fellows of — College, and a schoolfellow of my dear husband; at least that good gentleman, knowing the circumstances of the case, has promised that if John Calvin applies himself closely to his studies at the University, and does credit to the excellent education given him by his father, he shall not miss a degree for want of funds.

I now come to the trying part of my letter. Mr. Screw has sent me information by letter that the dilapidations on the vicarage are valued at 473*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*, and that I am debtor to you to that amount. This astounding intelligence has quite overpowered me; by some oversight of my dear husband we had never contemplated this demand, for though he once did mention dilapidations it was in some passing conversation which failed to fix my attention. I am quite a stranger to these matters, and take it for granted that it is all right in law, but I need not tell you how serious a prospect this debt opens to me in my present circumstances. I do not conceal that I am able to pay the sum of money, but when paid all my hopes of sending my son to Cambridge must be renounced, to my unspeakable grief, and his most bitter disappointment.

I am therefore made so bold by the hard position in which I find myself as to petition you to relinquish this demand, for though I doubt not it is correct in law, yet I am sure its equity is questionable, for if you take into consideration that we built a new kitchen and wash-house with a nursery over them, and, to my apprehension, always kept the vicarage very clean and neat, and the roof in good repair, it seems wonderful that the valuers can make me your debtor to the amount of a sixpence.

I must, however, entirely cast myself upon your

mercy; mine is the distress of a widow, and whether you grant my petition or refuse it, you shall always have the widow's prayer. That your ministry may be made abundantly useful in Tuddington, and that you may be a bright light of the Gospel, is the most earnest wish of,

Reverend Sir,
Your obedient, humble Servant,
CHARLOTTE THOMPSON.*

* N. B. The date of this letter precedes the publication of the "Golden" sermon.

LETTER XIII.

The Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL to
MRS. THOMPSON.

MADAM,

I HAVE duly received your favour of the
—— of this month, and without any phrases,
reply that I do not think it expedient to forego
my lawful claim for dilapidations. I have no
right or even wish to interfere in your concerns;
but I cannot help remarking that, with your small
income, it seems to me out of place to run into the
expense of a University education for your son.

My ministry will doubtless be useful in Tud-
dington, though the labour is not small; for where
so much has to be done and so much to be *undone*,
the task is greater than usually falls to clergymen
in these days.

I am, Madam,
Your obedient Servant,
RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

LETTER XIV.

From OBADIAH CRABTREE *to the Reverend*
RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL,

I AM of the Society of Friends, and therefore use very plain language. I have seen a copy of the letter written to thee by Charlotte Thompson, widow of thy predecessor, touching the dilapidations of the vicarage house; I have seen thy reply to Charlotte Thompson, and am much grieved at the spirit displayed in thy reply, as well as in thy published sermon. The devil seems to be sifting thee thoroughly, and it so happens that we have as yet seen nothing but the chaff. Thou must be in a great delusion to think that thy present conduct can make the people of Tuddington embrace thy foolish notions about Apostolical succession, for if the Apostles were like thee, it would be very tempting for all thy parishioners to turn Turks or Jews sooner than belong to such a religion as thine. I have, however, read much, and know full well that priests, when once they give way to high notions about their order, are the most foolish as well as the most mischievous creatures upon earth. William Laud, the Archbishop

of Canterbury, was exactly one of thy sort, and perhaps more than half the Bishops now on the Bench have the like creed, and persuade themselves that all their arrogant usurpations of power and riches are for the glory of God. Ignorance, however, is no excuse for sin, neither shall it be an excuse to such furious bigots as Pope Gregory the Great, William Laud, and Rabshakeh Gathercoal, that "the God of this world had blinded the eyes of them that believe not." Thy case is very bad, for thou art not only a bigot but an apostate, and having known the truth hast wilfully entangled thyself in the nets of Satan. To argue with a priest who could publish a sermon like thine on Jude, 8th verse, is quite hopeless; nevertheless it is onc's duty to reprove and warn such a one of his iniquity.

For the matter between thee and Charlotte Thompson, I inform thee that some of her late husband's friends, amongst whom the writer of this letter is to be reckoned as one, having become acquainted with the hardships of the case, and having heard that she has paid thee the sum of 473*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.* in full discharge of all thy demands upon her, have entered into a subscription to relieve her distress, and to enable her to send her son John Calvin to Cambridge, according to her good husband's desire when he was alive. This subscription has been confined exclusively to the inhabitants of Tuddington, and has raised the sum of

1200*l.*; of which 900*l.* has been contributed by the "schismatics;" who, according to thy opinion, have *no claim to be considered Christians*, because they have separated themselves from the government of archbishops and bishops.

I think it right to let thee know the progress of this business; for as thou hast proved that "drunkenness, adultery, robbery, and murder, and every species of vice and iniquity proceed from the principles of dissent," thou shouldest be furnished with another of our sins for the second edition of thy sermon; namely, "a relief of the fatherless and the widows."

I hear that thou art preparing a strict inquisition for priest's wages; and that all tithes are to be paid to the uttermost farthing. In this case thou wilt be able to gratify thy propensities by seizing some of the property of

OBADIAH CRABTREE.

LETTER XV.

*From the Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.*

EVER DEAR BROTHER,

ACCORDING to the promise of my last letter, I send you by parcel (for it is too bulky to send as a letter), the lecture of Edward Mervyn in defence of his darling sin of schism, which he has now so fastened round his neck, that it will be found at last to sink him like a millstone in that gulf of perdition, which long ago swallowed up the celebrated Church of Dissenters, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Owing to the excitement in Tuddington, the lecture, though it was delivered on the evening of a week day, was attended by immense crowds; many persons, unable to squeeze themselves into the chapel, were mounted up on the window-sills outside; and the doors were thrown wide open, that as many as could stand in the street and hear, might catch a sight of the pulpit. All this is somewhat trying to one's nerves, and might alarm any other clergyman; but I feel certain that when the novelty of this opposition is worn off, the people will return to their right senses, and like wandering pigeons, come back at last to their

original dovecote. I shall add no comment on the matter of the lecture, but leave it for your own private consideration. I say nothing further in this letter, except that the affair of Mrs. Thompson's subscription has grievously vexed me. Obadiah Crabtree gave 500*l.*; but I intend to pounce on the old Quaker's sheep for tithes, in a very short time.

Your sincere

RAB.

EDWARD MERVYN'S LECTURE ON
NON-CONFORMITY.

“CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

“IF you see me occupying my pulpit for the first time as a decided controversialist, and hear me for the first time discussing the question of Church government, a question which has lately been agitated with great heats in the kingdom, but has never, till within these few weeks, found a footing in the town of Tuddington, you must not blame me for this change from peace to war: for you all know who is the cause of this strife; and that we Dissenters are unwillingly driven to stand up in our own defence.

“The Reverend Rabshakeh Gathercoal has been pleased to publish a sermon preached by him in St. Mary's Church, which sermon I take it for

granted you all either heard delivered, or have seen in print. That sermon, in the most unmeasured language, charges Dissenters with every species of wickedness ; declares that they are a portion of the Church of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ; and that the whole secret of dissent consists in spiritual pride, and listening to the suggestions of the devil. The Church of England is set forth as the only true Church under heaven ; and all who withdraw from its communion are denounced as filthy dreamers, who defile the flesh, and speak evil of dignities. In short, whatever the most railing tongue can utter, or the most malignant hatred invent, is heaped on us, not only in this printed sermon, but in every sermon which the Vicar preaches ; and we are every Sunday libelled and slandered, and doomed to hell ; and persecuted with such unmitigated scurrility, that it is manifest we have much cause to thank Providence that we are not now living in the days of the faggot, the san-benito, and the stake.

“ This unprovoked attack upon peaceable Christians (though, indeed, our Vicar will not allow that we are Christians*) has filled us all with deep sorrow ; we have done all we can to avert the mischief, but all our efforts at reconciliation seem only to increase the blind rage of our adversary ; and we, therefore, have deemed it right no longer to sit still, lest some of our friends should

* Letters of L. S. E., p. 183.

really think there is some foundation for the Vicar's railing accusations, and interpret our silence into an impossibility of making any reply. We are, moreover, driven to reprisals by the approbation shown to our enemy in quarters where we should have expected more prudence; for it is no secret to you that not only do the Clergy highly applaud our raging Vicar—but that the Bishop of London has publicly recommended the letters of L. S. E., (from which our Vicar takes every syllable of his abuse of us,) as an able defence of the Established Church, and a most faithful portraiture of dissent.

“The question, therefore, between us is simply this,—*Is the Church of England the Church which Christ established?* For if this be not proved, if it cannot be shown that the Established Church of England is the very Church which our Lord instituted, and which has come down to our days exactly as it was moulded by the care of the Apostles, according to the direction of the Head of the Church, then does all this fine system of our Vicar fall down with a ridiculous overthrow, (like a house built by a child with a pack of cards,) and this celebrated controversialist is seen in his true character of a slanderer and a bully.

“First then to the question of *Apostolical succession* of the Bishops of England:—The Vicar makes this the great turning point of *his* salvation, and *our* damnation; and out of this has he even

fabricated all his crackers, which he mistakes for thunder ; and which he hurls right hand and left as he gallops over the *pons asinorum*, a second Salmoneus of imposture and noise.

“ In slightly handling this question, I may first congratulate Dissenters that Mr. O’Neil, the Catholic Priest, has here taken the Vicar to task ; and has accused him of the very sin of schism of which he accuses us. The Correspondence between Mr. O’Neil and the Vicar, by the kindness of the former gentleman, I am enabled to lay before you ; and as it speaks more to the point than anything I can say, with your permission I will now read it.”

[Here the lecturer read aloud copies of letters No. viii. ix. x.]

“ In addition to these letters, Mr. O’Neil has circulated a tract on the supremacy of Saint Peter, so that the poor Vicar has now to act on the defensive, and, coming down from the usurped chair of authority, to undergo the wholesome stripes of the Head Master. We see, therefore, by this correspondence, that the doctrine of the Apostolical succession of the English bishops compels the Clergy to trace their spiritual birth through the fingers of the Popish bishops, an origin of which no Protestant Minister can be very proud, though there is, as you know, no accounting for tastes : at least, I, for one, on consideration of this pedigree, feel heartily rejoiced to say for the Dissenters,

vix ea nostra voco. The Church of England herself has spoken so very plainly about the Church of Rome, that the Clergy are reduced to a pretty dilemma by the doctrine of succession. The homily against peril of idolatry calls the Church of Rome “a foul, filthy, old withered harlot,” from whence we gather that the English bishops are sons of a harlot, a dignity which would no where be coveted but on a bench of bishops; for what is considered a grosser insult than to call a man ‘the son of a ——:’ and yet this is the very title in which the Successionists are compelled to glory!

“But again; the homily of the Church of England declares that ‘the bishops of Rome and their adherents are NOT the true Church of Christ:’ now that which is *not* the true Church is no Church at all; for by the Vicar’s doctrine there is but one Church: so then the ‘spiritual descent of the English bishops’ comes from *nothing*—is in fact a nonentity—a Tohu and Bohu of Popish darkness.

“But again; when the English Prayer Book was first published in the reign of Edward VI., the act of Parliament declared it to have been arranged by the bishops, through ‘the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.’ In this book, composed by Divine assistance, was this sentence in the Litany. ‘From the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, good Lord, deliver us,’ and yet through the

Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities are the English bishops engendred!

“ Now only consider the infamy of this pedigree ; a whore, a false Church, a detestable enormity ! The Church of England has not, however, said a word too much against the Church of Rome, for it is Antichrist, the mother of abominations, and the throne of sin, and truly since the world began there never has been any thing so iniquitous as Popery. Bad however as it is, the Successionists are compelled to trace their origin through ten centuries, at least, of superstition, blasphemy, false doctrine, idolatry, and lies ; in short, whatever is wicked in Popery, whatever is ‘ detestable ’ and ‘ enormous ’ is the hot-bed from which they spring—whatever bears the mark of the Beast, and of the paws of the Dragon, is the soil of that nursery wherein our Parliamentary prelates were planted as slips and offsets from the tree of evil.

“ I will not, however, deal in these hard words against the Roman Catholic superstition, trusting only in the authority and copying the example of the Church of England, but will quote to you the words of Baronius, a most celebrated Catholic writer, and whose name always carries great weight in controversy. Speaking of the tenth age of the Church, he says, ‘ What was then the face of the Roman Church ! how deformed ! what whores,*

* Alluding to that infamous woman Marozia, who placed her gallants in St. Peter’s chair.

no less powerful than vile, bore the chief sway at Rome, and at their pleasure changed sees, *appointed bishops*, and, what is more horrible to mention, thrust into St. Peter's See their own gallants, false Popes, who would not have been mentioned in the catalogue of the Roman Popes but only for the *more distinct recording of so long a succession of times.*' In fact Baronius was compelled to record these monsters of iniquity to show that the succession had never been broken, and this is the succession on which the Roman Catholic and Protestant prelates depend for the pedigree; so that if these infamous demons of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries were not recorded, then behold the chain would be interrupted, and the poor bishops would not be able to trace their genealogy!

“What then does this succession theory amount to?—that for eighteen centuries the bishops' heads have been touched by the hands of their predecessors, and that an enormous majority of these bishops have been bad men, idolaters, ignorant and superstitious bigots, corrupt and avaricious, too often polluted with a horrid sensuality, and stained with the blood of the Martyrs. Will any one who knows the least of history pretend to say that this touching of the head has conveyed grace through the dark ages? Did bloody Archbishop Arundel, who burnt the Lollards, and bloody Bishop Bonner, or sensual Cardinal Wolsey,

Archbishop of York, convey the divine gift when they consecrated bishops? Nay, I would ask if a link of this chain was unbroken in the consecration of a late Bishop of Clogher, or of Bishop Atherton, who was hanged at Dublin in the reign of Charles I.? If then the fingering of the head fails in doing that to which it pretends, it does nothing at all for the argument; or rather it materially injures it, for it acts a bold lie, inasmuch as this is part of the ceremony of consecrating bishops.

“ ‘ *Rubic*—Then the Archbishop and Bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected bishop, kneeling before them upon his knees, the Archbishop saying, ‘ *Receive the Holy Ghost* for the office and work of a bishop now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Trinity, Amen; and remember that thou stir up *the grace of God which is given thee by this imposition of our hands.*’

“ A right view, therefore, of the succession doctrine makes it of not so much value in the eyes of a Christian as the mystery of carnal reproduction; for it proves nothing but this, that he who is a bishop is a man, and that his head has been touched by the hand of another man who can boast the like privilege before him, and so on through the wars of the Crusaders, and the dark ages—through the sanguinary strifes of the Arians and Athanasians—through all the various heretics that

have ever swarmed in the Church up to the first touch where your theory commences. If I see a new-born infant or a little child, he is indeed a child of wrath, and original sin has made him guilty at the bar of divine justice ; but his mould has been curiously wrought by the hand of the Great Artificer, and he is a production of the wisdom of omnipotence, and culture may make him wise, and a holy education may train him up in the fear of the Lord, and thus finally he may become wiser than the ancients, because he keeps God's statutes ; but what is there divine in a bishop, *viewing him as a bishop and not as a mere man* ? and what is there to admire in him, or how is he, in his episcopal attributes, any way to be deemed holy, or as a production of omnipotent wisdom ? All I know of him is this, that on a certain day the King ordered the Archbishop and Bishops to consecrate him, to put their hands on his head, and to say that they gave him that which most assuredly they cannot give, and which he has not received from them. I see in him, therefore, nothing but a solemn deception decorated in lawn ; and I neither love him nor reverence him, whether he be making speeches in parliament, or smiling at the levee, or sitting on his throne ; and I as little believe that he has power to give grace by his finger-ends as to raise the dead by his voice, nor will I believe the one till I see him do the other.

“But they who are genuine Episcopalian Successionists are bound to believe, that on a certain day the King, in compliance with the wishes of his prime minister, named a Dr. Phillpotts, a Dr. Maltby, or a Dr. Allen, to receive the mystical influence from the hands of the prelates—and that *it must be so*, for if the bishops refuse to exert their inherent virtue they will incur the penalties of a Præmunire, be prosecuted by the Attorney-General and ousted of their bishoprics: moreover this their virtue *must* emanate upon the bishop elect, be he who he may, be he Whig or Tory, Arminian or Calvinist, Trinitarian or Socinian; whoever the King commands to be consecrated must be consecrated—no question can be asked, no difficulty started; the Archbishop must impart grace to any one the prime minister of the day sends to him, for the King is the head of the Church, and there is no appeal from Cæsar. What monstrous, yea, profane deductions are inevitable from this idle notion! This profaneness, however, is not to be charged to the account of those persons who expose the delusion, but to those who seek to perpetuate it and to profit by it.

“Can any one, then, deny this consequence of the succession theory, or rather, does not the Vicar openly assert it, that any clergyman, whether they have the fit qualifications or not for the Christian ministry—whether they have any design or no to pursue the ends of the solemn

office which they take upon them in consecration—whether their consecration be for love or money—to manifest the power of a cabinet minister or to fill their own pockets—yet all is one, being any way prelatically ordained bishops they may ordain others, and so the successive ordination is preserved and the Church of Christ glorified.

“And whilst these violent clergymen are thus ranting about their ‘succession,’ what do they not say, on the other hand, against those who reject their system? For let a Dissenting minister be ever so godly—let him be eminently blessed in the conversion of sinners—let his sermons be judicious, eloquent, and full of the Gospel—let the people unanimously express their affection for him as a minister and a man—let him fulfil all the requisites prescribed by the Apostle Paul, such as being blameless, the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, nor given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers—yet all this would go for nothing with the Vicar of Tuddington; he would call him only a ‘teacher of schism;’ declare ‘he had no pretension to be called a Christian;’ denounce him as the fautor of ‘wickedness, licentiousness, and rebellion,’ and, finally, find no better place for him than

the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram : and all for what ? because he had not had his head touched by a Parliamentary Prelate, and had not, on a certain day, according to the King's mandate, sworn a solemn oath on his knees to obey 'the Archbishop and Metropolitan Church of Canterbury ;' though of a truth it would puzzle all the bishops in Christendom to find in Scripture any allusion to an Archbishop or a Metropolitan See, and though it be most certain that the Metropolitan Sees of York and Canterbury were invented by the Church of Rome, which the Homilies of the Church of England have somewhat uncivilly termed 'a foul, filthy, old withered harlot.'

"If, then, it be true, as Bishop Burnet justly remarks, that 'the spirit of Antichrist is a conspiracy to exalt the power of the clergy, even by subjecting the most sacred truths of religion to contrivances for raising their authority, and by offering the world another method of being saved besides that prescribed in the Gospel,' what must we say to the Gathercoalians who thus rattle their stage-thunder about Bishops and Apostolical Succession, the King's mandate and obedience to Canterbury, as if men could not possibly be saved who are not under the jurisdiction of a Parliamentary Prelate ? In what part of Scripture will they find this doctrine ? How will they churn this venom out of the sincere milk of the word ?

“ Our Vicar has quoted the ‘ venerable reformers ’ and the venerable prelates of the Established Church, as if they were all of his way of thinking ; and, indeed, such ignorance exists, or is counterfeited by the modern clergy in all Church history, that they scruple not now-a-days to assert any thing to suit their purposes ; taking it for granted, I suppose, that the world in general knows still less of these matters than they do, and that, therefore, anything may be asserted with safety. Let us then see what the ‘ venerable prelates ’ have said on the point in controversy. I find in Strype’s Life of Archbishop Cranmer the following document, ‘ Articles concerning the Christian Religion, given by the Reverend Father in Christ, John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, unto all and singular Deans, Parsons, Prebendaries, Vicars, Curates, and other ecclesiastical ministers, within the Diocese of Gloucester, to be had and retained of them for unity of agreement. . . . 4. That they teach that the Church of God is the congregation of the faithful, wherein the Word of God is truly preached, and the Sacraments justly ministered, according to the institution of Christ ; and the Church of God is *not*, by God’s Word, taken for the multitude or company of men, as of Bishops, Priests, and such other, but that it is the company of *all* men hearing God’s word and obeying

‘ the same—lest that any man should *be seduced,*
 ‘ *believing himself to be bound unto an ordinary*
 ‘ *succession of Bishops or Priests,* but only unto
 ‘ the Word of God, and the right use of the Sacra-
 ‘ ments. 5. That though the true Church cannot
 ‘ err from the faith, yet, nevertheless, forasmuch
 ‘ as no man is free from sin and from lies, there
 ‘ is, nor can be, any church known, be it never so
 ‘ perfect or holy, but it may err.’

“ This astounding broadside of ‘ schism,’ coming from a regularly appointed Bishop of the genuine Apostolical Church, must blow the crazy timber of our Vicar all to pieces ; I do not, therefore, think it requisite to add to these words any comment of my own, nor will I say any more on the topic, except to add, that the nineteenth article of the Church of England exactly agrees with the fourth article of Bishop Hooper : for as the nineteenth article never once names archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons as a part of the Church of Christ, so does the fourth article of Bishop Hooper carry out that silence into a corollary, by plainly saying that no man need be bound to believe ‘ an ordinary succession of bishops,’ for such a belief is a SEDUCTION !

“ Having thus briefly noticed the delusion of the Successionists, we must now consider the office of Bishop itself ; concerning which, the Protestant Episcopalians utter every possible falsehood,

short of that only falsehood which can make their theory plausible—a submission to the popes as successors of St. Peter.

“It is very well known that the word Bishop is to be found in our English Bible, that word being in the Greek *Episcopus*; and what is there said of that office is to be found at large in the Apostle Paul’s Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, where any one may judge by comparison with the realities before our eyes, whether the *Episcopus* described by Paul can be taken as a faithful portrait of an *Episcopus* in the sees of Canterbury and York.

“Supposing a stranger to our customs and religion were to ask for certain marks whereby to find out an *Episcopus*, and we were to turn him loose in the land with the following directions: ‘Go and seek through the land for persons who are blameless, the husbands of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no strikers, nor greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not brawlers, nor covetous—men that rule well their own houses, having their children in subjection with gravity; no novices, lest being lifted up with pride they should fall into condemnation of the Devil, having a good report of them which are without, free from the reproach of the Devil—moreover, they preach the word, are instant in season and out of season—they reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and

doctrine; they watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of Evangelists, give full proof of their ministry'—Would it, I ask, be fair to furnish our stranger with these directions? Would they be of any use to him? Would they not grievously deceive him? and, instead of leading him to fix upon one of our mitred prelates—the only genuine Episcopi—rather direct his attention to some hated 'teacher of schism:' a Mr. James of Birmingham, a Mr. Parsons of York, a Mr. Scales of Leeds? Well, then, if these directions would be of no avail to our stranger in finding out one of the succession Episcopi of Parliament, how ought the Apostle to have written his description, so as that strangers really might be able to discover these wonderful men, in the palms of whose hands, and on the tips of whose fingers are hung all the glories, nay, the very existence, of the Christian Church? Ought not the indication to be rather in this language? 'This is a true saying, if a canonically ordained priest desire the office of a Bishop he desireth a good job. A Bishop, then, must be in priest's orders, and a doctor of divinity; one who hath taken a degree at one of the universities, formerly a tutor of a great nobleman, a scion of a noble family, a creature of a cabinet minister, an editor of Greck tragedies, or a writer in a ministerial review. He must be elected by the King's *congé d'élire*, directed to the dean and chapter of

a cathedral church, which electors must needs elect him or be prosecuted by the king's attorney-general. He must wear a rochet, lawn sleeves, cope, tippet, bands, and wig; keep a coach painted purple, dress his valets in violet-coloured coats, and have armorial bearings with a mitre. The whole body of the faithful must call him "*My Lord*," and "*Right Reverend Father*," according to the express command in the New Testament (Matt. xxiii. 9); he must be a baron in Parliament, ordain priests and deacons, give canonries and livings to his sons and nephews, receive many thousand pounds sterling every year, and have precedence next to viscounts, and above barons. If he like to preach, he may; and if he like not, he may let it alone. He must have a diocese according to the Scriptures, and always sit in a throne when he is worshipping in his cathedral, and he may be promoted from one diocese to another, and finally become an Archbishop.' If we had been furnished with a portrait like this, then it would have been an easy task for our stranger to discover an Episcopus of the English or Irish Church; he might with this index have recognized the Archbishop of Armagh, or embraced the Bishop of London, as a true successor of the Apostles, and our Vicar then might have had some foundation for all his railing accusation of Dissenters; but as matters are

not so, we may safely conclude that a Bishop of an English or Irish diocese bears no sort of resemblance to an *Episcopus* described by Paul.

“Now, I have made these remarks prefatory to a closer inquiry on the subject, that you may not be misled by mere words; for so easily are some persons perplexed by words and letters, that, according to their mode of reasoning, a single phrase is quite sufficient to make them admit a falsehood as an indisputable and established truth. And on this very topic there may be found multitudes of unsound logicians, who, because they find the word *Bishop* in the English Bible, and see a man called a *Bishop* sitting in the House of Lords, immediately jump to the conclusion that the Church of England is a Scriptural Church, to the solace and strengthening of their most frivolous faith.

“As, however, there is, as we have seen, an *Episcopus* in Scripture, what is such an officer amongst Christians? He is the same as Presbyter, an elder, an overseer, a person in whom the Church has reposed confidence, according to judgment formed by observation, and ratified by election. The Church saw in their Elders or Bishops signs of sanctification through the operation of the Holy Spirit, and such were set apart by solemn prayer to the charge of the flock. There were *many*, that is, there was a plurality of such persons at Philippi. ‘Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ

Jesus, which are at Philippi, *with the bishops and deacons.*' What can the Episcopalians, who would portion out salvation into dioceses, make of these many bishops at Philippi? Half-a-dozen, perhaps, or ten, or a dozen 'Bishops' all in one town! How can diocesan Episcopality be reconciled with the state of the Church at Philippi as made manifest by this address? The truth is often discovered by a very short sentence, and in this one text, without going any farther, there is quite enough for us to ascertain that the Church of England rests on Popery and not on the Scriptures.

"Scott, an Episcopalian, in commenting on this passage, has the candour to make the following remarks: 'Paul addressed himself to the Saints at Philippi with the bishops and deacons: hence we learn that the distinction between presbyters and deacons *was not then generally established*, but that the pastors of the Church were distinguished from the deacons who managed the secular matters of the charities of the Church.' This, in other words, is acknowledging that the three orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon were not then invented; that diocesan Episcopacy, which is the dominion of one Bishop over many, was unknown, but that the Churches were managed much as Independent Churches now are, by pastors and deacons. Scott goes on to say, 'Much labour and learning have indeed been employed to set aside this conclusion, but

with little success, even by the allowance of decided Episcopalians.' Why have this party brought labour and learning to bear against the direct testimony of the Scriptures? Why have these erudite and laborious persons thus endeavoured to put dark for light, and to pervert the plain meaning of words? Is it not to raise a stumbling block in the path of Christians, and to make them believe a lie; they in their consciences knowing all the time that their system is indeed a lie, and that it requires ingenuity and management to make it appear otherwise?

“(In Acts xx. 18—27.) The Apostle Paul being at Miletus, sent for the Elders or Bishops of the Church of Ephesus; ‘he called the Elders of the Church,’ and he said to them (28), ‘Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.’ This passage is of great importance, because the way in which it has been managed by our translators renders it very suspicious that the word of God has been, by design, made to episcopize, and that the whole truth has not been allowed to appear. To understand this perfectly, you will observe that the translators in this text have rendered *Episcopus* ‘Overseer;’ and the reason of this management is obvious, for had they rendered *Episcopus* in this text ‘Bishop,’ then behold! it would have ap-

peared that the Elders or Presbyters of the Church of Ephesus were Bishops, and consequently that the office of Elder and Bishop were the same, whereby the whole dream about the three degrees would have been dissipated. We take the text, however, as it stands, and not as the translators pervert it, and by this passage we know that the Holy Ghost had made the Elders or Presbyters of the Church of Ephesus 'Bishops,' and that their duty was to feed the Church and to take care of it, which is all that a diocesan Bishop can do, and much more than many of them ever have done.

"Before we quit this passage, we will deduce from it the following argument; 1. Either these Elders here spoken of were Elders only and not Bishops; 2. Or Bishops only and not Elders; 3. Or, which we plead, and what the text affirms, the same persons were Elders and Bishops. Now if the first be asserted, then there was no Bishop at Ephesus, because the Elders had the oversight of the flock, and no Bishop came to meet Paul. If the second, then there were no Elders at all at Ephesus, which is a strange interpretation of the words that Paul 'called to him the Elders of the Church.' If the third be granted, which indeed is inevitable, then it is an extinguisher for the lovers of the three degrees, and proves that an Elder was called an overseer because he had oversight of the flock, and that we have so managed the

simple word 'overseer' by fraudulent translations as to make thereby an overseer a Bishop, and a Bishop a priest with a mitre on his head; so that the minds of thousands are thereby deceived, and led to pay adoration to this idol of man's hands.

"Again: Peter writes *to the Elders* of the Church that they should feed the flock, (1 Peter, v. 1—3,) taking the oversight, or exercising the office and functions of a Bishop over them, *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, and that, *not as lords*, but as samples (of humility, obedience, and holiness) to the whole flock. On this passage good Mr. Scott the commentator makes the following remarks:—
 'This must be allowed a decisive testimony that
 'no express distinction between Presbyters and
 'Bishops was at that time, when the Apostle wrote,
 'established in the Church.' At every turn, therefore, do we find the Successionists and the Trigradists discomfited by the Scriptures; there is nothing to help their Popish theory; and though there is indeed an *Episcopus* or Bishop in Scripture, yet he is quite another thing from an English or Irish prelate: for a prelate is an arch-pastor, or a lord over many score churches in his diocese, for which there is no more authority in Scripture than there is for an arch-prophet, or an arch-deacon, an arch-gravedigger, or an arch-baptist.

"Now it is well known by those who have studied ecclesiastical history that the identity of Bishops and Presbyters is either asserted by some

of the Fathers, or so stated as to make it quite impossible to reconcile the statement with the high notions now once again in fashion. Jerome, in a passage which has often been quoted, says that the distinction between Bishop and Presbyter was unknown at the first, and was an invention of later days. Theodoret, commenting on the third chapter of the Epistle to Timothy, has these words : ‘ Formerly Elders and Bishops were the same name ‘ or designation, and those whom they now call ‘ Apostles they used to call Bishops ; but in process ‘ of time they left the name of Apostle to those who ‘ really were Apostles, and gave the name of Bishop ‘ to those who were formerly called Apostles.’ Here Theodoret testifies that the words had been changed, which is quite sufficient to destroy the idle theory of the three degrees, and in fact we find repeated testimony that Apostle, Elder, or Bishop, Bishop, Elder, or Apostle, were indifferently used in the Apostles’ days, which it could not be by any means allowed amongst Episcopalians in these days. Thus we find Peter (i. v. 1) saying, ‘ The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also a fellow-elder,’ *συμπρεσβυτερος* ; and John the Evangelist begins his second and third Epistles by styling himself a Presbyter or Elder. Rightly to apply these examples, we need only suppose the case of a clergyman (who is called in the Church of England a Presbyter) writing to the Archbishop of York or the Bishop of London, and

giving to those prelates the title of Presbyter and Elder! *In these days* such a designation would be considered a gross insult, because an English Bishop conceits himself to be something immensely above a Presbyter or an Elder, and he would most certainly reprove the clergyman, who had thus written to him, as guilty of an unwarrantable liberty, and would charge him with introducing confusion and sedition into the Church of Christ. The Apostles and Episcopi of the Scriptures have different views from the prelates of the Established Church.

“Again: Chrysostom, in his first homily on the Epistle to the Philippians, teaches that Presbyters, or Elders and Bishops, were names of *the same order*; and again in the eleventh homily of Timothy he uses these words:—‘Why does Paul, omitting the order of Presbyter or Elder, pass from the Bishops to the Deacons? for this reason, because the difference between Bishop and Presbyter was scarcely any, for the Elders had received the power of teaching and presiding over the Churches, and whatever things he had said about the Bishops agree perfectly with the office of Elder also.’

“Now I do not quote these testimonies of the Fathers as carrying weight in the argument, for I know full well that any bad thing may be proved from these contentious, violent, and unscriptural writers, who hesitate not to utter any calumny to

blaeken their enemies, or to exalt the power of the clergy: my only motive for bringing them forward here is, to show the clergy that their favourite theory of tradition may be turned against themselves; that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing;' and that they had better really examine what may not be proved by tradition and by the Fathers before they browbeat Dissenters with high-sounding authorities.

"To finish, therefore, these evidences, I shall quote the words of Archbishop Cranmer, the Father of the Church of England, preserved in Bishop Burnet's Records, appended to the History of the Reformation. The record is entitled, 'Some Questions concerning the Sacrament.' Qu. Whether Bishops or Priests were first? and if the Priests were first, then the priests made the Bishops. Cranmer answered, 'The Bishops and Priests were at one time, and WERE NO TWO THINGS, BUT BOTH ONE OFFICE, in the language of Christ's religion.' Qu. Whether the Apostles, lacking a higher power, as not having a Christian King among them, made Bishops by that necessity or by the authority of God? The answer is very long, but towards the end, says, 'The ministers of God's word *under his Majesty* be the Bishops, Parsons, Vicars, or such other priests as be appointed *by his Majesty* to such ministration. In the admission to many of these offices be divers comely ceremonies and solemnities used, for if such offices and ministrations were committed

without such solemnity they were nevertheless truly committed ; and there is no more promise of God that grace is given in the committing of an ecclesiastical office than in the committing of a civil office in the Apostles' time, for as much as the Christian people had no sword nor governor among them, they were constrained of necessity to take such curates and priests as either they knew themselves to be meet thereunto, or else as were recommended unto them by others, that were replete with the spirit of God and so sometimes the Apostles and others unto whom God had given abundantly his spirit, sent or appointed ministers of God's word. Sometimes the people did choose such as they thought meet thereunto ; and when any were appointed or sent by the Apostles or others, the people of their own voluntary will with thanks did accept them, not for the supremacy, empire, or dominion that the Apostles had over them to command as her princes and masters, but as good people ready to obey the advice of good counsellors, and to accept anything that was necessary for edification and benefit.'

“ Thus, Christian friends, have you heard enough from this Lecture to convince you that we have abundant reason for denying that form of Episcopal authority, lordship, and power, which you now unfortunately see in the Established Church, but which is wholly unscriptural and contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel? By what I have said, I

hope you will now clearly understand what is an Episcopus of the New Testament ; and you also know better than I can tell you what an English or Irish Episcopus is, by their doings in the business of the Reform Bill, and by their unwearied struggles for tithes and Church property.

“ It is, therefore, for these reasons that we Dissenters constantly and holily refuse to show the smallest obedience to a Bishop of the Established Church ; to acknowledge his jurisdiction, or seek the miraculous touch of his hand ; to listen to his pretensions, or heed his anathemas. Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone. The Bishops, whom our Vicar loveth, have got what this world can give them, and what this world also seems much disposed to take away from them. They have chosen an inheritance corrupted, defiled, and fading away. We leave them to their diocese, which is the kingdom of this world and all its glory ; but as for ourselves, having our own Episcopi, our own pastors, our own overseers, who are apostles, we trust, not of men, neither by men—having through their means the faithful preaching of the word, and the administration of the Sacraments ; we care not for all the threats and browbeating of an impotent Clergy, who in these days can indeed show their teeth, but have lost the power of biting ; and who have been deprived of the only arguments wherewith they ever could meet the Dissenters, namely, the dungcon, the pillory, the stocks, and the gibbet.”

LETTER XVI.

*From the Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.*

DEAR BROTHER,

WE are getting into the very thick of the battle now—Mervyn's Lecture has excited the schismatics to a high degree of impudence. Timson the bookseller told me yesterday that if I cannot answer it, and that very satisfactorily, he shall be obliged to turn Non-conformist; for as I insist now on communion with the Church on these high grounds, *and will not let matters alone*, (a phrase with this sort of people,) he must make up his mind to a decision whether these high grounds are tenable; and for the present he thinks the argument all against me.

Widow Braithwaite, who has made a handsome fortune by carrying on her husband's business of draper, and is now retiring from trade, has taken a pew in Mervyn's Meeting House. I called on her to ask her reasons for leaving the Church, and hoped she was not so weak as to mind the shallow arguments of a schismatical lecture: she replied that *my* sermon had made her a Dissenter; that she did not hear Mervyn's lecture; but now that she had seen it in print, it had confirmed her in her

determination. I saw Beverley's letter to the Archbishop of York on her table, but I made no remarks.

Jane is daily more melancholy: we scarcely ever speak a word to one another. Some sad thing will turn out here, I am certain. In addition to this, I have received of late many letters from my *Nephew** Frank, which show that his mind is taking a wrong turn. It appears to me that all the evil spirits of Bclzebub are let loose in the land; every one now seems inquiring about these matters, and seeking for arguments to leave our Apostolical Church. Frank's letters I send for your perusal, they will speak for themselves. I insisted on his being confirmed by the Bishop of Ely, and he did at last unwillingly obey me. Indeed I told him plainly that we would remove him from the University if he did not please me on this point; and as I know he is very ambitious to distinguish himself, this was a blow at his favourite hope which he could not resist. If it was not for this miserable tendency to schism, we might rejoice in the lad, for they tell me at Cambridge he is sure to get high honours. On the other hand, however, as a set-off against these untoward circumstances, I have the applause of the Clergy, and the promises

* This young gentleman, son of Rabshakeh's sister, was sent to Athanasian College, Cambridge, by his two uncles, who paid for his education, on condition that he should renounce dissent, and in due time take Deacon's orders. The sentiments of this youth will be seen by what follows. His father was a churchman, and his mother a dissenter.—ED.

of the Bishop of L——, and the assurance from his lordship that my sermon contains much ‘sound reasoning.’ I am daily receiving letters from clergymen wholly unknown to me in various parts of the kingdom; they tell me I have given a blow to the hydra of schism from which it will never recover.

One or two in this neighbourhood deprecate my system, and predict nothing but evil from the course I am pursuing; but Dr. Birch tells me not to mind their croaking, or, if I feel any misgivings, to keep before my eyes the example of Archbishop Parker, who, sooner than renounce his determination of enforcing the necessity of pontifical dresses, saw unmoved the whole Church of England deprived of the most learned and pious Clergy then existing—that great Prelate cleared the Church and Universities of all “tender consciences;” and though for a long time England was thereby deprived of the best preachers, yet his determined and unflinching conduct preserved us the surplice, which as you know is an emblem of the “righteousness of the Saints.” In short, dear brother, you and I have long since agreed that half measures have well nigh ruined the Church of England, and that the system of concession has brought us into the predicament in which we are now involved, and from which the Duke of Wellington will scarcely deliver us, with all his energy and brilliant talents. The repeal of the Test

and Corporation Act opened the floodgates of licentiousness, and from the time of that fatal measure the waters have been pouring in upon us—the Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill were the breaking down of two great banks, accelerating our total ruin. Nevertheless, the case is not perhaps yet hopeless, at least it is our duty to believe so; and as long as we hold the high station of the pastors of the flock, we must not only feed the lambs, but, like Peter, “kill and eat.”

This puts me in mind of Obadiah Crabtree's sheep. I had a demand of tithes against him, to the amount of 13*l.*, and I am determined to seize some of his stock, for he has a small farm in which he takes great delight. “Good Mr. Thompson” would never take tithes of the few Quakers in the parish, though his liberality has in fact been only money put out at interest, seeing that the broadbrims have subscribed very large sums to his widow.

I ordered the constable to seize the black-faced sheep on Obadiah's lawn, and sure enough the whole company of the bleating brethren are in my paddocks, waiting for a purchaser; for we have not yet been able to raise the money by auction. The Dissenters exerted themselves to prevent any one coming forward to make an offer, and have hitherto succeeded; but we shall put up the sheep to sale again to-morrow, which is market-day; and if no one should make a bid, Stubbs declares

he will himself purchase them at ten shillings a-head. In all these matters I am acting under the advice of Mr. Scrope, the Rector of Amberwell, the leading magistrate of these parts, who is well read in Ecclesiastical as well as in statute law, and who tells us to go on with the great work zealously, for he assures me that if every clergyman in England would pursue my plan schism would be extirpated in three years.

I should not forget to inform you that we expect a great stir at the sale next market-day, for my servant has just brought me in a handbill, which he says is in every one's hands. I judge by the Latin motto, and the style, that Mervyn is the author.

“TITHE SALE.—APOSTOLICAL CHURCH.

“Dic mihi, Damætas, cujum pecus, an Melibœi?
Nou; verum Ægonis, nuper malus abstulit Ægon.”

“Whereas Rabskakeh Gathercoal has been prelatically ordained by touch of the Parliamentary Bishops, and has sworn fealty to the metropolitical See of York, according to Act of Parliament, whereby he is a priest in the right line of succession from the Apostles; and through them is also descended from the sons of Aaron, Archbishop of Stony Arabia, so that he has thus full right and

title to all the tithes, first-fruits, oblations, heave-offerings, and wave-offerings ever claimed by the Levites; and that too in a much more ample and glorious way, because the Christian Priesthood has greater emoluments than that of the law; this is to give notice that the aforesaid Rabshakeh, in exercise of his spiritual heritage, has seized thirty black-faced sheep belonging to Obadiah Crabtree, Quaker, who being one of the sons of Korah will pay no tithes to the son of Aaron; and that the said black-faced sheep will be put up to auction next market-day, in the parish of Tuddington, to pay the aforesaid Vicar his tithe debt, amounting to thirteen pounds one shilling and two-pence. At which sale all good Christians are required to attend, to show their love and respect to the new Aaronical Priesthood, which has the profit and pleasure of tithes without the inconvenience of circumcision; and this respect must be shown by three cheers to Apostolical Church and Succession Priests*, 'not for their own sakes, they are but earthen vessels, but for their work's sake, on which account the people are expressly and unconditionally commanded to obey them.'

"Given under the Fisherman's Scal,
in the Year of Succession
3325.

"Tuddington."

* Vicar's Sermons; and letters of L. S. E., p. 65.

I must not close this letter without telling you that Mr. Prebendary Walford has called upon me to pay his respects to the brother of L. S. E., and to the author of the sermon on Jude viii. This gentleman is a very learned scholar and a deep thinker; but, to tell you the truth, he is beyond my depth; for when he favours me with his conversation about the Church (and he talks of little else), it is in such mystical language that I cannot guess at his meaning. He says much about "the idea of the Church antecedent to its visible state," and then he descants about a "reserved nationality," and a "universal clerisy forming all the units of the state in their up-growing tendencies," with a great deal more of this metaphysical mystery, of which I can make neither head nor tail. He is, however, quite contented if I listen to his harangues, and this I do with a show of attention which seems to win his heart. They say he is a mighty opium-eater, but sure I am he drinks a vast deal of brandy with as much composure as if it were water.—And now I must close this rambling epistle.

Your sincere brother,

RAB.

LETTER XVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAREST BROTHER,

THIS must be a long letter, but I will first dispatch the affair of Crabtree's tithe-debt. The hand-bill, of which I gave you a copy in my last, was posted in all the neighbouring villages, and drew an immense crowd to the market-place. It was really a serious business, and when I saw the preparations making by the mob I began to be much alarmed. Mr. Scrope doubted whether he should not send a messenger to Leeds for a detachment of military from the barracks; I strongly urged him to this precautionary measure, but Dr. Birch dissuaded it: he said we had better let *them* begin with violence—we had but to leave the rascals to their own machinations, and they would be sure to break the law—our policy must be forbearance for the present, by which we should be sure to get an advantage over the schismatics. The Dissenting teachers, however, with their characteristic cunning, had been very busy in persuading the people to keep quiet, and Mervyn had issued a hand-bill, signed with his name, beseech-

ing all persons to keep the peace, and not to raise a little finger to violate the law. There were, nevertheless, some fiery spirits, who determined to make a great business of this sale, and for this purpose they held previous meetings to make a show of what they call "popular indignation." When all was arranged and the constable brought the sheep out of my paddocks, there were ready standing at the gate not less than five hundred country-people, arm in arm together, in files of six, with tri-coloured ribbons in their hats or button-holes. Before them was a band of music and a large black flag, with these words painted in white letters, "The wicked principles of Dissent have a tendency to destroy Christianity itself, and to abolish religion from the face of the earth,"* and the procession was closed with a lad carrying a board on a pole, bearing this inscription, "My kingdom is not of this world." The thirty sheep came forth loudly bleating, and the rebels gave a dismal groan to greet them. As the procession advanced to the market-place, distant about half-a-mile, the crowd increased to a dense multitude, and when all was ready, Stubbs assured me it was a very imposing sight. The people made a great circle, and kept quiet till the sale began. The auctioneer wisely said very little; but having waited some time to see if any one would make a

* Letters of L. S. E., p. 33, and Vicar's Sermon.

bid, he begged somebody to name any price, for *the sheep must be sold*. After a little silence a country-fellow said, "There is not a man twenty miles round Tuddington big villain enough to offer a penny for the parson's comfort." This was received with a loud cheer from the multitude, the music struck up, hats were waved, and then all present began clapping their hands. At last Stubbs summoned courage to offer 10*s.* per head for the sheep, and at that price they were knocked down to him. The mob groaned and hissed, and threatened to pump him; but Crabtree and Mervyn came forward, and making short speeches to the people, persuaded them to do no violence to any man for that day's work. The business ended with the procession following the sheep to Stubbs's field, the band all the while playing the Dead March in Saul.

Nothing further was done till night-time, when they all assembled again in the market-place to burn a bishop in effigy. They brought the figure into my court-yard with an escort of torches and a flaming tar-barrel. The effect was very curious; for besides the effigy of the bishop, with silver-papered sleeves, which imitated the lawn very well, they had hoisted a young man on a shutter, who was dressed like a clergyman in full canonicals, a portly personage, wearing a shovel-hat, who gave out some doggerel verses at intervals, with a ludicrous air of swaggering importance.

These verses were a parody of parts of my sermon. Having amused themselves in this way for half an hour with much laughter and merriment, they gave "three groans for the Vicar," and went their way to the market-place; there they kindled a fire of straw, and with grotesque ceremony consigned the effigy to the flames, amidst a discharge of squibs and crackers and a volley of sky-rockets. Thus ended this day, and thankful I am that all has ended so quietly. They will be tired of this work ere long, and I shall for the future get my tithes without any trouble.

Strange, however, it is to me, when I reflect on these things, to see the sad contempt into which our order is now fallen. Who could ever have believed that, in the lapse of so few years, we, who were standing on the pinnacle of dominion, and had the people beneath our feet, should be compelled to hear and see the things now said and done against both the Bishops and Clergy? Who could have believed, ten years ago, that it would be so soon not only a question whether the Prelates should keep their place in Parliament, but whether the Church itself should be any longer supported by the State? What shall we have next in this æra of changes?

On the Monday following this affair was the clerical dinner at Scarborough's Hotel, in Leeds. I received intimation beforehand that this meeting was in fact to honor me, though no parti-

cular purpose was named in the invitation. We met about fifty in number, the party was entirely clerical, and, but for the folly of one man and the malice of another, it might have been a day of great things to the Church; as it turned out, it was only a source of vexation and bitter disappointment. Dr. Birch was in the chair; the dinner and wines were excellent, the conversation was sprightly and interesting, and when the cloth was drawn we drank some jovial healths to the King—the Queen—the Duke of Cumberland—and “the Duke of Wellington, the great defender of Christianity.”

Mr. Scrope then proposed my health in a very flattering speech, and paid some high compliments also to the author of the Letters signed L. S. E. My speech I will not trouble you with, for you know my sentiments sufficiently to make a speech for me.

Prebendary Walford rose next to propose the health of the Archdeacon, but, without the slightest allusion to that which ought to have been his theme, he began all at once with his mysticism. He lectured us about “the Church and the State in the idea of each.” He said, “that in the spiritual purpose of the word, and as understood by reference to a future state, and to the abiding essential interest of the individual as a person, and not as a citizen, neighbour, or subject, religion *may* be an indispensable *ally*, but is *not* the

essential constitutive end of that national institute which is properly a Church in the idea of Church." "The national clergy, or clerisy of the nation, in its primary acceptation, comprhended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of *music*, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical, as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the liberal arts and sciences, as well as the theological. Under the name theology, or divinity, were contained the interpretation of languages, the tradition of past events, logic and ethics, and lastly, philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas." "This," he said, "was the Church in the idea of Church, and the idea," he said, "was the most real of all realities, and of all operative powers the most actual."

Here the learned gentleman seemed to mount into the clouds, and continued some time a strain beyond my powers of recording; at last he came to this passage:—"During the dark times when the incubus of superstition lay heavy across the breast of the living and the dying, and when all the familiar tricksy spirits in behalf of an anti-national priesthood were at work in all forms and in all directions to aggrandize and enrich a kingdom of this world, large masses were alienated from the heritable proprieties of the realm under

the name of Church property. Had every rood, every peppercorn, every stone, brick, and beam been re-transformed and made heritable at the Reformation, no right would have been invaded, no principle of justice violated. What the state by law can do or suffer to be done, *that the state by law can undo or inhibit,*" &c.*

Here the murmur, which had been audible for some time, burst forth into a vehement expression of anger. Half a dozen elergymen rose at the same time, and at last Mr. Serope made himself heard by raising his voice louder than the rest: he jumped on the table, and protested against the doctrine that the State could touch Church property; "they had not met together for such a mischievous harangue as this, and if the reverend gentleman thought that his mysticism should be allowed to poison the sincere milk of the word he was grossly mistaken; all the elergy were now unanimous in their opinion that Church property was coëval with the creation, and that tithes great and small, oblations, and Easter offerings stood on *an unrecorded revelation of God to Adam*; † it was madness in these days to take a lower ground; if once it should be conceded that Church property was a human institution, then it would follow that what man had established man might destroy;

* See "On the Constitution of the Church and State in the Idea of Each," by S. T. Coleridge, Esq. 1830.

† See *Dr. Cove on Tithes*, a very sound and orthodox volume.—EDITOR.

the law had nothing whatever to do with Church property, which was divine, holy, inalienable, unalterable—it was the property of Heaven and not of earth, and Parliament had no more power to touch tithes or cathedral endowments than they had power to touch the crystal firmament.”

This speech was loudly applauded. Dr. Birch, our chairman, here interposed with his good humour, and restored order. He said that, Mr. Prebendary Walford had a learned and subtile way of thinking, which was not understood by the ordinary breed of parsons; he himself was free to confess that he never could comprehend any *idea of a Church, antecedent to chaos itself, consisting of a universal clerisy, and the most real of all realities.* These universal teachers of mathematics, music, divinity, dancing, logic, singing, arithmetic, history, and fencing, might some time have existed, perhaps in Plato’s great island of the West, or in extreme Taprabone; but never had he (Dr. Birch) seen or heard of such a *clerisy.* “The clerisy, gentlemen, that I have seen is a company of goodnatured priests, with a very ample creed from high Calvinism down to the lowest Socinianism, and enjoying themselves in all possible ways, from fox-hunting down to reading lithographed sermons. If the Dissenters would let us alone, pay tithes and Church rates, and not stir up the nation against us, by telling people that we are the spawn of Babylon, I have

no doubt we should let them alone. My creed is ‘*live and let live* ;’ a good fat living, a bottle of old port, and a few old friends, give me a very good *idea of the Church* ; and when I receive, as I do, 800*l.* per annum in the shape of tithes, I think it *the most real of all realities*. But if Mr. Walford should set us, who are the clerisy, to teach the nation all the fine things he talks of, I shall think this a very poor ‘*manifestation of the Eternal Church in the idea of it*.’ Gentlemen, it appears to me, therefore, that Lord Henley’s idea of the Church, namely, a minimum of 400*l.* per annum to every parson in Great Britain, with a maximum of 1600*l.* per annum, is a much better idea of the Church than Mr. Walford’s ; and with your permission, therefore, I will give you a toast—‘*Lord Henley’s idea of the primitive Church*.’ ”

This toast we drank with much laughter, to the no small annoyance of the mystical prebendary. When order had thus been restored, after a time, up rose the Honourable and Reverend Mr. Arden, second son of the Earl of Birmingham. It had been a matter of surprise to many of us, before we sat down to dinner, to see this young gentleman amongst the party, for he is known amongst us as a very unaccommodating *evangelical*, who keeps aloof from the clergy, and lives by himself, deeply immersed in study, and altogether of a sombre and melancholy temperament. I should not forget

to tell you that his curacy is only two miles from Tuddington, that he was a great friend of "good Mr. Thompson," but never once has condescended to pay me a visit. When you read all he said you will be amazed that we let him go on, seeing that we had tolerated so much less from Prebendary Walford; and indeed I can only account for it by the respect paid to his rank, and by his commanding and *prince-like* air. He is very tall, has a remarkably elegant person, a pale face, with large black eyes and black hair; and I must confess that it is impossible to hear him speak without involuntarily paying him deep attention. He spoke as follows:—

"The object of this meeting, Mr. Chairman, having never yet been fairly stated, I have been endeavouring ever since we have been in this room to ascertain the motives of those who have been pleased to call us together. The invitation which I received was orally delivered by a friend, who begged me to attend a meeting of the clergy, which, he believed, might be of importance in the present crisis. As no proposition has, however, yet been brought forward, and as no gentleman present seems to have anything to propose, I presume that the convokers of this meeting had no other object in view than to pay a compliment to the Vicar of Tuddington, which having been paid in the usual style, it would seem that no other labour is now imposed on us than to settle

the tavern bill, and return to our respective homes. I am anxious, Mr. Chairman, that this meeting should not terminate with results so unimportant, and I therefore beg leave to bring forward a proposition for the consideration of my reverend brethren, which I must preface with a few necessary remarks. If we should separate without having performed any thing more efficient than the compliment of a toast to the Reverend Vicar of Tuddington, it would appear to me that our enemies, who are not less observing than numerous, might accuse us of congregating for a most frivolous object; and these, Mr. Chairman, are not days when we can incur any additional ridicule with impunity. I am sorry that the health of that reverend gentleman has been drunk at all, and should wish, if it were possible, that we might wash it away with the waters of oblivion; but the word, having escaped *the hedge of teeth*, cannot be recalled; and as the Vicar of Tuddington has now received the wishes of his brethren for an increase of health, it only remains for us to add thereto a prayer that he may henceforward employ it in purposes honourable to himself, and to the Church of which he is a minister.

“ I am, however, sorry that this health has been drunk, because it has been coupled by the proposer with a eulogy on the Vicar of Tuddington, as the preacher of a published sermon, and as the brother and imitator of L. S. E. To me, Sir, it appears

that neither the preacher of that sermon nor L. S. E. are entitled to the thanks of the clergy. I would have added, Sir, that they have merited nothing but our *contempt*, had I not this day, for the first time, heard the sentiments of the Bishop of L—— on the merits of these brothers, sentiments at which I am amazed beyond description. That a prelate of so much pretension to scholarship and to discernment—that a gentleman so well versed in courtly manners, and in that species of sagacious prudence which is the boast of the Jesuits—that a politician of so much *management* as the Bishop of L—— should have recommended the Letters of L. S. E. to the clergy—should have given it as his opinion that they ‘*contain much useful information and sound reasoning*’—is a matter of deep regret to every clergyman who is not content to grovel in the lowest grade of stupid and brutal bigotry.

“I have performed, Sir, the painful task of reading these said Letters of L. S. E., and for some time was disposed to consider the book a clumsy and exaggerated caricature, written by a Dissenter to make the sect of bigots in our Church look ridiculous; but when I heard all around me the serious applauses of my brethren, and observed how the Vicar of Tuddington was extolled for his printed sermon, I was compelled to open my eyes, and to look on these Letters as the *bonâ fide* production of real malevolence, the undoubted labours of genuine clerical spite.

“As the Bishop of L—— has only pronounced a general approbation, we must be at a loss to know in what part of the book to find this *sound reasoning*; for to me every page seems replete with such foolish rant, such violent perversion of Scripture, and such desperate blunders, that I marvel much how even the least instructed of all the great army of our priesthood could accept this miserable volume with approbation. We must, Sir, I fear have fallen into a very low estate indeed to admire, or even to tolerate, these Letters, though stamped with the approbation of a notorious prelate; and I know not what excuse to find for our order in thus having committed ourselves, unless indeed we may plead that the political excitement of the times, or the alarm of an approaching downfall, have so bewildered our reason as to make us say and do things of which we should be ashamed in a more tranquil season.

“It does, however, appear to me a most imprudent, I had almost said a most insane, stroke of policy, in this turning point of our future destiny, to come forward with the old rusty sword of Archbishop Laud in order to frighten the Dissenters into obedience. It is a scheme full of folly, and worthy only of ridicule in these days to dress ourselves in the worm-eaten garments of Popish precedence, and to strut once more on the stage as the bullies and monopolists of the Christian religion. In darker days than these—in the heats

and violence of the Restoration, and under the sway of the cursed* house of Stuart, we gained nothing by our arrogant assertions of exclusive privileges; and the uproar of Sacheverel agitations was of no permanent benefit to our cause; but now in these days, with the Reform Bill bearing upon us in full force—with the notorious disaffection of the people, and the dying state of our sister Church in Ireland to call us to repentance—to set up again our idle claims of inherent apostolical rights, and to denounce the vast body of Dissenters as schismatics and atheists, who ought not to be allowed even to abide in the country (for such is the doctrine of L. S. E.)—this I say, Mr. Chairman, is an incredible degree of fatuity, and fully verifies the old adage, that Jupiter first deprives of reason those whom he wishes to destroy.

“I look round, Sir, on this assembly, and I calculate that there are now seated round this table not fewer than twenty clergymen professing serious views of religion, and much am I grieved that not one of these gentlemen should have entered his protest against the vote of thanks to the Vicar of Tuddington, and that the task should have fallen on me as the only dissentient. To the consciences of these gentlemen I must appeal, and ask them if

* The reverend speaker applied the word *cursed* to the House of Stuart as designating the manifestation of Providence in their fortunes. The curse of God to punish accumulating wickedness is seen in the utter ruin of the Houses of Stuart and of Bourbon.

they can, with complacency, or even with patience, suffer it to be recorded, that this day's meeting has had no other object than to register a vote of thanks to the author of such sentiments as we see in the Letters of J. S. E.? Gentlemen, I turn to you who are called Evangelical clergymen, and I demand of you how you can justify your conduct in thus declaring a brutal war against a large portion of the Church of Christ? I repeat my words, *a large portion of the Church of Christ*; for I deem him an unworthy brother who shall dare to pronounce a universal ban of excommunication on the great multitude of Non-conformists, many, very many, of whom, we must believe to be amongst the redeemed and chosen tribes of Israel. The Non-conformists are numerous, powerful, intelligent, and religious members of the body politic; their pulpits are occupied in most of the great towns by very able preachers, very diligent pastors, and very pious Christians. Their chapels are large and well attended, their congregations are in many places overflowing; they have their own colleges, their own Missionary Societies, and their own institutions, religious and literary, supported by the voluntary contributions of their own body. I have ascertained that some of the Dissenting chapels in London raise annually no less a sum than 1400*l.* for the support of the minister, and in aid of the religious institutions which depend on their liberality—and we have only to look

attentively at these things, which cannot be denied, to convince ourselves of the folly of raving against them as atheists and as wretches, who ought barely to be tolerated in the nation, or who ought, at any rate, to be branded as schismatics, and treated as enemies of the Divine Redeemer.

“But, again, I must appeal to my Evangelical brethren present,—is it not notorious that the very best divinity is to be found in the school of the Non-conformists? What a brilliant constellation do we behold when we turn our eyes to this part of the Christian firmament! and the stars here are not only numerous but of the first order—such as Dr. John Owen, the prince of divines, Howe, Charnock, Baxter, Bunyan, Goodwin, Calamy, Edwards, Henry, Fuller, Watts, Doddridge, Gill, Flavell, together with a long list of other venerable writers, whose works must ever be precious to the Church of Christ, unless Popery or Socinianism should drive the truth into the wilderness—a catastrophe which never can be brought about but by the predominance of a political religion. And are we not compelled to draw largely from the Non-conformist writers for our best divinity? Are we not constantly quoting their sentiments, and enriching ourselves with their doctrine? Let me but refer you to the publications of the Tract Society, two-thirds of which are writings of these ‘execrable schismatics,’ republished by our funds in a cheap form, and largely distributed in various parts of

the kingdom by many of the Evangelical clergy—and yet these Non-conformists are the men whom we seek this day to brand as schismatics and apostates, infidels and atheists!

“If we come to names of living Dissenters, we shall find Dr. Pye Smith and Dr. Wardlaw, whom to praise I consider superfluous; or if we wish to ascertain who are their celebrated preachers, there are Mr. James of Birmingham, Mr. Stratton of Paddington, Mr. Binney, Mr. Evans of Gray’s-inn-lane, Dr. Fletcher of Stepney, Dr. Andrew Reed, Dr. Redford of Worcester, Mr. Blackburne of Pentonville, Mr. Lichfield of Craven Chapel, and many others: men whose successful proof of the ministry cannot be denied.

“The Vicar of Tuddington and his elder brother have, indeed, been pleased to use opprobrious terms of the lowest scurrility against some eminent Dissenting ministers now living—scurrility, in which, as Christians and gentlemen, we are called on to declare that we take no part; for how can we expect the least mercy at the bar of the nation, when we shall be called up for judgment, if, not content with the disreputable character of too many of our clergy, we endeavour to make our offence the greater, by insulting and calumniating those who are better than ourselves? Therefore, gentlemen, I say we are called on to repudiate the calumnious railings of the Gathercoal family, and to convince the world, that, whatever the views of

the Bishop of London may be, we are not compelled, as a matter of course, to follow his example, merely because we are Episcopalians. Let us hope that Dr. Blomfield may see his error and have the candour to confess it, for the door of repentance is opened as much for a Bishop as for a 'Publican,' though it is to be feared that more publicans than Bishops care to pass through that door.

"If, however, some persons think that we indeed are entitled to take this high ground, and to assert these pretensions, which received a severe blow in the decapitation of Archbishop Laud, their inventor, and which I had hoped were buried in the grave of the last non-juring parson—what a different aspect should our Church present to the world before we bring these pretensions forward?

"We do, indeed, seem determined to pelt the Dissenters; and the Author of the Letters of L. S. E. has prepared some pellets of filth, on which the Bishop of London has bestowed his blessing; but we forget our own glass heads, which cannot but be cracked in this pelting match. Let it, for argument's sake, be conceded that the Dissenters have no pretensions to be called Christians*, and that they are branches cut off from 'the true vine,' yet what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy con-

* Letters of L. S. E., pp. 106—183, et passim; that "all Dissenters are and must be schismatics and heretics," is proved satisfactorily by L. S. E.—ED.

versation and godliness before we take the Apostolical chair, and sit down to judge and condemn all those who have withdrawn themselves from our discipline! But what, Sir, is the real state of the Church of England? what sort of men are its Prelates? and how have they attained their prelati- cal dignities? It is commonly said by the Evangelical Clergy, that there are *three good* Bishops at present on the bench; this is a very delicate way of putting it. Nor will I alter this mode of expressing a painful truth, the deduction from which is evident; but what serious reflections ought it to give rise to in our bosoms that we are compelled to extol these *three good Bishops*, that is, three who preach and encourage the Gospel! Is there no Bishop now on the bench who is *accused* at least of holding Socinian tenets? For this accusation I must refer you to a review of Dr. Maltby's sermons in the Christian Observer. I myself express no opinion on the subject, for I consider it superfluous. Then we have Bishops opposed to Bishops, or, at any rate, opposed to a large portion of the Clergy: for if there be no Bishops professing Calvinistic tenets, at this present moment, are there not hundreds of the Clergy who *do* profess them? and is it not notorious that all we Evangelical Clergymen look to the Bishops, or the great majority of them, as persons ignorant of the Gospel, or directly opposing it? What do we not say against Bishop Tomline's despicable

theology? Have not some of our body written sharply against his erroneous views of the faith; and yet his *Elements of Christian Theology*, and his *Refutation of Calvinism*, are text-books with a majority of our priesthood, and with two-thirds of the Bishops. It is no secret that Bishops Tomline, and Pelham, and Herbert Marsh, repressed the Evangelical Clergy; it is no secret that these Arminian Prelates have gone great lengths in endeavouring to root out Calvinism from their dioceses; there are now living amongst us clergymen who have been chased out of their dioceses, and hunted from one diocese to another by letters dimissory. The Reverend W. Dodsworth, now a popular preacher in London, was followed by episcopal hatred through three dioceses, threatened, insulted, and silenced; and such cases are very numerous. If then the creed of our body is thus unfixed and uncertain, and if the Bishops are opposed to the Evangelical Clergy, we have little reason at present to claim the prescriptive office of teaching the nation; for how can the nation decide which of us is in the right? And until this be decided, it seems to me very natural that the people should flock to the Methodists and Independents; where they can choose Arminian or Calvinistic tenets without being disturbed by a Bishop on the one hand, or an Evangelical Clergyman on the other.

“It is an invidious thing, Sir, to speak against individuals; but if I were so disposed, I might, per-

haps, name some of the Prelates now living, who, to say the least of it, come very far short of the description of a Bishop to be found in the Scriptures. I could trace the secret elevations of many of them, and show how little the glory of God is considered in the consecrating of our courtly prelates; but I pass over the political intrigues of some, and the avarice of others—I omit naming the tragedians and reviewers, the courtiers, and the tutors of noblemen who now perpetuate our boasted line of Apostolical succession, and I come at once to the great body of the clergy. Here, Sir, I am treading on ground considered holy, and I must walk delicately—but this may be said without giving offence, that we are notoriously divided into two great bodies, Evangelical and non-Evangelical; that the non-Evangelical constitute an immense majority; and that the Evangelical party accuse this majority of *not preaching the Gospel!* Not to preach the Gospel, Sir, is a very serious thing in a professed Minister of the Gospel; it is as if a soldier would not fight, or a husbandman would not till the ground, or a sailor would not manage the ship—nay, Sir, it is as if the sun would not shine in the Heavens, for we are the light of the world, and if we do not shine, the world must be in darkness. But supposing the Evangelical party are wrong in this accusation,—then it must follow that they themselves do not preach the Gospel, and that

they calumniate and defame their brethren: so that we are on the horns of a dilemma, and, either way, seem to have small pretensions to those high and inherent qualities which Mr. Gathercoal has ascribed to our body.

“ But again, Sir, I fear the lives of very many of us are anything but clerical. I see some here present who are much addicted to field-sports,—some go out with Lord Harewood’s hounds*,—some are excellent shots,—some are fine dancers,—some play beautifully on the flute or fiddle,—some flirt with the ladies,—some play at cricket,—some are scientific anglers,—we are to be found in the ball-room, the stables, and the dog-kennel,—all this may conduce to our health, and may be very agreeable, but it is not clerical; and if it is not clerical, we are condemned—for this is again as if a soldier were not military, a sailor not naval, or a husbandman not agricultural.

“ And the consideration of what we really are, and how little we can bear a close inspection, makes me deeply deplore the extreme imprudence of L. S. E. in endeavouring to injure the dissenting body, by recording scandalous stories against some dissenting Ministers or members of dissenting Churches. Mr. Gathercoal’s ill will against the Non-conformists has not, with the utmost anxiety

* The Reverend and Right Honourable Lord Scarborough was lately killed by a fall from his horse in the fox-chase.

to make the case appear as bad as possible, recorded a dozen cases of reprehensible conduct in that body of Christians from which he is a fugitive, and which he has had means of contemplating all his life ; but we, Sir, are in such a moral condition that I know not the size of that volume which, with the closest printing, would be able to contain the scandalous stories of our numerous clergy. Let us suppose that the reformed Parliament were to copy the precedent of the Long Parliament, and were to appoint a commission to inquire into the cases of ‘ scandalous Ministers ’ in every county ; with orders to publish a report, containing the result of their labours ; who amongst us would not tremble at the disclosures ? who would not wish that we had never entered into the controversy, and that we had allowed our Church to be reformed without provoking the Dissenters to reprisals ?

“ But for other reasons still more important do I lament our apparent approbation of the Letters of L. S. E., since, to identify ourselves with the sentiments which they proclaim, is clearly to reveal to the world the secret wish of our hearts, and the tendency of our system—unlimited persecution : for who that has read those vulgar and violent Letters must not see that they attribute enormous power to our Clergy ; and without disguise assert the privilege of restraining all opposition, and even of banishing Dissenters out of the kingdom ? The spirit that animated Archbishop Laud and Arch

bishop Sheldon ; the spirit that raged against the Puritans from the days of Queen Elizabeth down to the passing of the Toleration Act, breathes through these Epistles ; and indeed whenever a priesthood is fully persuaded of the divine right of its own religious monopoly, whenever it takes the high ground of inherent superiority, then must all who deny this monopoly be looked on as criminals of the worst sort, whom it is a virtue to deliver over to the secular arm. History has not been written in vain. A caste of privileged priests is inevitably cruel and persecuting, and certainly our clergy never have been renowned for mercy. It is a painful, but very instructive task, Mr. Chairman, to read our Church History, and to trace the bloody footsteps of our now superannuated and decrepit authority. Considering our origin, and how we ourselves have escaped out of the fangs of Popery, with ‘the skin of our teeth,’ our persecution of the Dissenters has been the most wicked I know of. To watch the Elizabethan Bishops, themselves but hardly saved from the stake, filling the gaols with Non-conformists, and ruining countless families by penal extortions, or hanging men for writing against the Prayer Book ;—to see the fury which animated our Clergy after the Restoration, and to notice all the bloody persecutions of the Dissenters, from the landing of Charles II., down to the passing of the Toleration Act, will furnish abundant proofs of the tendency and

propensity of our priesthood, when not restrained by the superior mercy of the laity. It is calculated that not less than 5000 Dissenters perished for non-conformity in the reigns of the Stuarts; and we all know with what extreme indignation the Toleration Act was received by the clerical body. In fact the high Church party, from the reign of William III. up to this present hour, have only been restrained from acts of violence against the Dissenters by the barrier of the law; and it is clear, by the writings and sermons of all that party, and by the flattering reception with which we have honoured L. S. E., what we would do if we had the power to indulge our inclinations. I, Sir, for one, should be sorry to see our hands untied; and if the Conventicle and Five-Mile Acts were revived, and the power of burning heretics restored to us by law, I feel convinced that, in spite of the spirit of the times, we should vigorously attack the Dissenters with the priestly arguments of the gaol, the gibbet, and the stake.

“ Can we, Mr. Chairman, remembering all that we have done when we had the power to work mischief, can we be surprised to hear the Dissenters now calling out for the humiliation of us Episcopalians? We did all we could to exterminate them when the sword was in our hand, and we thought we did God a service in persecuting them—but now when they only require that we should be made, what they are—Dissenters—when

they, and the nation with them, demand an equalization of Christian sects, we cry out that religion is at an end, and that faith must be driven from the face of the earth if we lose our tithes. The tree which we cut down, but could not root out of the earth, has sprung up again into luxuriance, and out of its timber they have made an axe to cut us down in our turn.

Rode, caper, vitem; tamen hinc. quum stabis ad aram,
In tua quod fundi cornua possit, erit.

“ Let us then for the time that remains be more prudent; let us take warning by the history of all established Churches, and not make our downfall more complete by thus putting forth ridiculous claims and frivolous pretensions with all the pride of a Hildebrand, and the folly of a Laud. It is a most vain idea to suppose that we ever can by any position of circumstances, by any political change, or by the policy of any Cabinet, ever attain to what we desire, *a monopoly of religion*. Dissenters have increased, are increasing, and will constantly increase. Ours is the religion of the aristocracy, a body that has passed its meridian, and is evidently declining; the whole tide of society is flowing strong against the Established Church; and however grand may be our ideas, and however intolerant our language, it seems to me utterly impossible that we can long delay our destiny—that we can long prevent ourselves from falling into the humiliation of an unprivileged sect. If I did not

hope and believe that the Church of England would be separated from the state, if I did not expect before many years shall have passed over our heads, to see our fabric based on the voluntary system, I should quit the Established Church and become a Dissenter; but having, on conviction, adopted Episcopalian views, (though not such episcopacy as the Gathercoals and the Bishop of London dream of,) I still cling to our superannuated and tottering Church, because I believe she will soon be compelled to die to the world that she may live to Christ. I anticipate her resurrection, I look forward to her new life of righteousness, and her regeneration from the rudiments of the world. I am in prophetic vision (I trust I may so call it) beholding, and that not far off, the ruin of her wealth, and her irremediable abscission from the state; and then, when there shall be no more palaces for titled Prelates, when the Church of England shall be for ever freed of courtly Bishops, who spend half the year in Parliamentary intrigues and the other half in amassing money; when tithc-carnage shall cease in Ireland, and Church-rate strifes in England—when livings shall cease to be bought and sold, and to be advertised in the Auction Mart—when the whole rout of fox-hunters, card-players, and money-hoarders shall be driven from the Ministry—when the Universities shall not be the schools and the corrupters of future Evangelists—then shall I rejoice to call myself a Clergyman of

the Church of England, a title which I now hold not without some feelings of compunction, feelings to which I know for a certainty several of my Reverend Brethren are no strangers. I, therefore, Mr. Chairman, propose the following resolution:—

“The Clergy assembled at this present meeting have drunk the health of the Vicar of Tuddington, as of a private gentleman—but in so doing, they totally disclaim any participation in the sentiments contained in his published sermon, or in the Letters of L. S. E.”

This speech I have given you as I copy it from the notes of a friend present—it was in reality much longer, and was delivered with terrible energy. I did not hear above half of it myself, for I was too confused and perplexed to understand what he was saying. I was revolving a thousand plans in my mind, and thinking what I should say or do when he had finished. Arden’s power was so great over the meeting, that no one attempted to stop him. I once rose up to protest against something which fell from him, but with a stern voice, he said, “Sir, I will not be interrupted—when I have finished what I mean to say, you can answer me at your leisure;” and the Chairman, who seemed overawed, desired me to keep my seat, and to wait till Mr. Arden had concluded.

Thus did I sit miserable and abashed till the harangue was ended, when Mr. Andrews rose to second Arden’s resolution. They all then called

on me by name, but when I got up to speak, all my ideas left me ; and after stammering out a few words about “ schism, and Apostolical succession,” my feelings so overpowered me, that I was obliged to sit down, and I believe I should have fainted but for the timely relief of tears.

Oh, dear brother, what did I not endure ! You must pity me indeed, for I was in a most miserable plight. My tears, however, roused some sound-hearted friends to protect me, and Dr. Birch at last found his tongue. I know not what he said, for all then became an uproar ; several got up to speak together ; one or two jumped on the table. Some cried out, “ *Divide, divide,*” others “ *No division.*” Dr. Birch roared out like a lion, “ The Church is in danger ;” but after a great deal of shouting and calling to order, Arden and his party left the room, about a score altogether as well as I could make out, and thus it came to pass that nothing was determined, for the party broke up in confusion, bringing to a close the most disagreeable day of my life.

Yours ever, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

FROM FRANCIS EMERSON *to the Reverend*
RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

Athanasian College, Cambridge.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

YOUR letter received by me last Monday has been very acceptable, for it gives me full permission to unburthen my mind on subjects which are to me of paramount importance; and you will perceive that I shall avail myself of the permission without reserve, by freely stating all those doubts that have arisen in my mind respecting the Church of England. If in making these remarks I should use great plainness of speech, I am sure you will forgive me, for my object is to tell the truth as far as I know it, and to ascertain it where I know it not. It is my hope that you and my uncle Lucifer will as freely answer all my objections, and that your answers may be more duly weighed. I propose to confine my remarks to *one* subject in each letter, whereby we shall be able fully to consider each question separately without confusion.

Your question about the real state of the morals of this university I will now answer before I pro-

ceed to more interesting matters. I find that the society amongst the young men here requires a very close inspection before any one can give an opinion respecting it. There are many *parties*, if I may so term them; that is, the habits of the Gownsmen vary according to their inclinations; and so distinct are these parties, that I am persuaded many young men here of serious and studious dispositions have not the slightest knowledge of what is going on all around them. The idle and the profligate constitute the majority; eating and drinking, riding out on horseback, lounging in the streets, and *killing time*, are the occupations of the idle. Then there is a party of *reading men*, the majority of whom are very sober and temperate in their habits, and indeed many of them are decidedly religious and sincere Christians. Some, however, of the reading men are sons of pleasure, only they manage their immorality in a more prudent and secret manner than the spendthrifts and the profligates who seek to figure in conspicuous intemperance. There is a party of *elegants*, gentlemen who study to be very refined in their manners, and who carefully avoid every excess, because it is supposed to taint that aristocratical dignity which is their idol. These youths are very luxurious in their habits, very exclusive in their friendships, and very proud and contemptuous in their demeanour. Their expenditure is great, and

their debts frequently much greater than their expenditure.

The Simeonites are, generally speaking, studious men, and make open profession of serious religion; their religion does not always bear an amiable aspect, nor is it always sincere, but there are many good men amongst them.

There is another party of religious gownsmen who keep aloof from the Simeonites, and who have their own private meetings, for they do not approve of all they see in the general body of the Simeonites. To this party, if to any, I belong. Our meetings vary from a dozen to near thirty. The tendency of this party is certainly to Non-conformity.

There are a few professed Dissenters, who keep quite secluded. I do not know one of them excepting by report. This is a tolerably correct sketch of the society of Cambridge. I hear very terrible stories of the *worst* gownsmen, for I often make inquiries about their proceedings, but with my own eyes I have as yet seen nothing beyond nightly uproars in the streets, and sincerely hope I never may. One or two of my schoolfellows are amongst the worst, and from them I receive such accounts of nocturnal proceedings as I wish not to believe. That any one should deny the existence of much disorder in the moral state of this University is quite surprising, and I do not see how it could possibly be otherwise than it is,

seeing all the temptations which are thrown in the way of the young men; but I will not undertake to confirm all that is stated in B.'s pamphlet, indeed I think he has written with too much acrimony, and I feel persuaded that his provoking style has driven some people to deny a great deal which they would not have denied had he put forth his statements in a different form.

Perhaps the best evidence of the real state of morals amongst the gownsmen would be by gaining access to the tradesmen's books, the expenditure and debts of the young gentlemen would then be seen in a way not to be denied; but this I presume is a sort of evidence that not even an act of Parliament would venture to demand.

The *external and surface* view of Cambridge is much better than I expected to find it, and the reading men are certainly a numerous body.

Having thus given an impartial account of the morals of the University, I must finish this letter by expressing my very great repugnance to the system of worship enforced here; and on this subject I suppose it is lawful to speak freely, since Lord Stanley himself has in the House of Commons spoken of the University worship with unmeasured reprobation. We are compelled here to go four mornings and four evenings to chapel every week, but what a profanation of God's worship are these shameful meetings! Only conceive two or three hundred young men forced unwillingly to chapel!

in our college at an early hour in the morning! Conceive the unfinished state of their toilet—the gabbling of the prayers by the hard-worked chaplain—the inattention of all present—the anxiety manifested in all to depart—and the total absence of every appearance of piety or even decency. Consider all the circumstances of the case, my dear uncle, and ask yourself if it could be well otherwise; and then remember how it is written, “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;” and must it not be confessed that chapel here is a mere profanation, and that it would be better to shut the chapel-doors altogether than thus to enforce a worship so scandalous as this?

Supposing the attendance at chapel were *voluntary*, how many do you think would come? But I forget that the Church of England is opposed to the voluntary system, and that her religion is now declared to be one of force.

The wearing of the surplice is to me and to a few others a very great trial. This Popish garment we are compelled to wear every Saturday evening, every Sunday, every Saint’s day, and every vigil of the festivals. We know so well the history of the surplice, that it is impossible to deny its Popish birth. The question of wearing or rejecting this absurd sheet is the well-known origin of Non-conformity, and if the surplice was opposed by some of the first Bishops of the Protestant

Church — if the great and venerable Non-conformists were content to die in prison sooner than carry about with them this badge of superstition, —how can we justify ourselves in assuming the Papist's masquerade dress?

Many of my friends laugh at my scruples, and ask me, "What does it signify?—shall I be any worse?—what harm does it do?" &c., but by this mode of arguing any wickedness may be introduced. A crucifix could do no harm—incense could do no harm. If the fellows of our college were to come to chapel dressed like Popish Priests in cloth of gold, and were to carry incense pots and banners, it could do no harm;—if we gowmsmen were to carry palms, and were to wear garlands, it could do no harm. But in reality the harm is very great; it is introducing into the worship of God that which is not appointed; it is adding to the work of Christ; it is yielding to the principle on which Popery depends; it is keeping up a friendship with the Beast; it is carrying his mark on our foreheads; it is adhering to the rudiments of the world; it is not worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

I protest I am perfectly ashamed of myself whenever I put on the surplice, for I never am dressed in this filthy thing without seeing in imagination the blood of the Non-conformists on its skirts, and nothing but the fear of expulsion would prevent me going into chapel in plain clothes. And yet this is a very shameful motive to obedience,

for which I can offer no excuse. How my conscience is to get clear of this stumbling-block I do not at present see. I know my duty, but do not follow it.

I find I have written as far as the limits of my letter will allow; in my next I will state my scruples on other subjects.

Your dutiful Nephew,

FRANCIS EMERSON.

LETTER XIX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

YOUR answer to my scruples about the surplice is indeed not satisfactory ; you tell me that “white linen is the righteousness of the Saints,” and that wearing surplices “encourages the linen trade.” The earthly reason I shall leave untouched, for I am in no wise concerned in it ; but for the spiritual reason I may be allowed to offer a reply.

It is very true, that, in the mystical language of the Apocalypse, white linen is called the righteousness of the Saints ; but if that were any argument for the Clergy or the young gentlemen of Cambridge putting on a white sheet, I should require, first, that the Clergy and the gownsmen of the Universities were really Saints, which is certainly not the case ; secondly, that all the Saints, all the spiritual believers of all countries, and of both sexes, should be dressed in surplices at all times. But if this symbolical mode of ornament is admitted, then do we at once concede the point to the Church of Rome, that we may worship,

not always in spirit and in truth, but sometimes by emblems and figures and theatrical representation. In this way we may keep candles burning all day in the churches, because Christ is "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" or we may offer up incense, because "Christ gave himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;" or we might mix water in the Sacramental wine, because blood and water flowed out of the wound in our Saviour's side; or, in short, whatever we can invent to gratify our fancy and to excite our languid imagination, may be resorted to in the adoration of the living and true God. The very smallest approach towards a sensual worship, the coining of any rite or ceremony not enjoined in the Gospel, is, according to my belief, a black and enormous crime, and it is by laxity on this subject that all the corruptions of the Church have commenced and been matured. To finish, therefore, this subject, as you have quoted Scripture for the surplice, I must also make my references. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy: he that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." (Rev. iii. 5.) This, in prophetic language, is very appropriate and solemn, but when put into practice in the persons of the Cambridge gowmsmen is not only ridiculous but profane and impious; for not only

are many of these white-robed youths not victorious Saints, but are unreclaimed sinners carried captive in the thralldom of their passions.

I shall now offer a few remarks on the Church of England compared with the Church of Christians, as seen in the Acts of the Apostles; and in the remainder of this letter shall adhere to this one subject.

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find "the disciples" electing an Apostle. Now, according to the doctrine of the Church of England, the Apostles appointed Bishops, and Bishops ruled the Church with monarchical sway; but here the disciples, one hundred and twenty in number, elect an Apostle, "from whom all Episcopal authority flows," whereby it is clear that the Church elected its own overseers, or Bishops—nay, that the very first act of the Church, as a body, was to do this very thing. The whole scheme of Prelacy seems to me to be overthrown by this one example, and in what way any writer, however ingenious, can reconcile the mode of elevating an English Prelate to the Episcopal throne with the narrative contained in this chapter I know not. In our English Church, the Prime Minister names the Bishop, the King issues the *congé-d'élire* to the Dean and Chapter of a cathedral, and they, by law, are compelled to elect the person whom the King appoints. I need not say, that this is

not the way of electing Bishops according to the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles.

Again, in the sixth chapter of Acts, I find the whole multitude of the disciples employed in electing Deacons or Ministers of the Church. "Then the twelve called *the multitude of the disciples* unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables; wherefore, brethren, *look ye out among you* seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business . . . ; and the saying pleased *the whole multitude*, and they chose Stephen." Here, again, the Church of Christians, in its collective body, men and women, "the multitude of disciples," elect the Deacons to attend to the widows in the daily ministrations—a process unknown in the Church of England, and which, as the Church of England is now constituted, is impossible, for the government of that Church is monarchical; one Prelate issues his commands in his diocese, no other authority but his exists or is known, and the multitude of believers are no more consulted, and have no more power, than the men of the Antipodes. This, therefore, to me is another proof that the Church of England is a Popish and not a Christian Church.

Again, when Peter received Cornelius, a heathen centurion, into the faith, he gave an account of it to all the Church. "Then they that were of

the circumcision contended with him, saying, thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised and didst eat with them: but Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning." (Acts xi. 3.) Peter, a maker of Bishops, according to the Prelatical theory, stands up and exculpates himself before the multitude of believers in Jerusalem; he thinks himself bound so to do, because he never dreamed of exercising a lordship over his brethren. The dignity and authority of a Diocesan Prelate he knew nothing of; he was a believer, and so were those to whom he addressed himself; he had not the most distant idea of writing a stately letter only to the Priests of the Church (for, indeed, no Priests did then exist); he never supposed he had any authority to issue his commands to them, styling them "My Reverend Brethren," and signing himself "Peter Babylon," or "Peter Rome" (whichever his diocese might be), but believing the whole body of the faithful to have an equal authority with himself, he, as one of their loved preachers, stood up, and, in a friendly way, explained the motives of his conduct to his brethren in the Lord, "and when they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto faith." They were satisfied with the explanation, and fully acquitted Peter of having done anything contrary to the will of God. Here, therefore, I find again that the Church, that is, the

multitude of believers, was totally different in its constitution from the Church of England.

Again, the Church of Jerusalem, in its collective form of all believers, sent Barnabas to Antioch. "Then the tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem, and *they sent forth Barnabas*, that he should go as far as Antioch, who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that, with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord." (Acts xi. 22.) The believers at Jerusalem took upon themselves an office which none but a Prelate is supposed capable of executing in the Church of England; for if letters of union were to be sent to some foreign Church from the Church of England, the matter would of course be arranged and commanded by the Bishops: the Bishops would cry out "treason" if any one proposed to send the mission without consulting them, and the believers in York or in Canterbury would be no more consulted than if they existed not. In the Church of Jerusalem, I can find the Saints acting with unquestioned authority; in the Church of England, the Saints are unknown, unheeded, and unconsulted. The Prelates command every thing. The law knows no authority but theirs; the Priests rule the people and the Bishops rule the Priests, which is, in fact, having the supreme authority, and there is no authority above the Prelate's, excepting an Act of Parliament; and all

this, again and again, my dear Uncle, convinces me that the Prelatical and Sacerdotal power is a usurpation, and that the Church of England is a Popish fabric, and is not the Church of Christ.

In a similar way *the Church of Antioch*, directed by the Holy Spirit, sends forth Barnabas and Saul to the Gentiles (Acts xiii.) ; and in the 14th Chapter we find, when this mission had been executed, that Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the result of their labours to all the believers, who had sent them forth ; not to any Bishops or Pricsts, not to a Chancellor's Court—to Surrogates, Proctors, or Grand Vicars—but to the believers : “ And when they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles : and there they abode long time with the disciples.”

Thus, also, in the celebrated council held at Jerusalem to settle the disputed question of circumcision, we see clearly that the matter was settled by the whole Church collectively. (Chap. xv.) “ Then pleased it the Apostles and Elders, *with the whole Church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, and wrote letters by them after this manner : ‘ The Apostles and Elders, *and brethren* send greeting *unto the brethren* which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia ; forasmuch as we have heard . . . it seemed

good unto us, *being assembled with one accord,* to send chosen men unto you, &c.’”

Now, suppose a question should arise about any doctrine, or any rite, in the Church of England—supposing some were anxious to alter the Prayer Book—would “the whole Church” be consulted? would the Saints in any way be questioned as to their opinion or wishes? would not the matter be determined in the Palace at Lambeth? and, having been so determined, would it not pass into a command by the sign manual of the King, as Supreme Head of the Church? In vain, therefore, do I seek for the smallest trace of the Church of England in the Scriptures: excepting the word “Bishop,” excepting those six letters, I cannot, by anxious investigation, discover any thing that bears the smallest resemblance to anything in the Established Church; nay, I know not how the ingenuity of man could well have invented a system more unlike the Church Government discoverable in the Acts of the Apostles and in their Epistles, than that fabric of Prelacy which is now established in England.

I have but one more passage to quote from Scripture relating to the Church of Christ. It is from the 18th of Matthew:—“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother: but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two

more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (15—17.) Any one on reading this passage, who had not a theory to defend, or a party to support, would naturally determine, if asked, that the Church here mentioned meant the body of believers, who, having received a believer into their body, were the fit persons to judge of his conduct, and to rebuke him. This is so evident, that nothing but dishonesty could well dare to deny it; and yet if this interpretation be allowed, it is fatal to the diocesan Establishment, for then it would follow that the believers, as a body, had the power of excommunication; and that Bishops' and Chancellors' Courts, who now usurp this right, are an invention of Popery,—that our Lord says nothing of Prelates and their power; and that the authority of rebuke and excision is vested solely with the whole company of the faithful. As this conclusion has been foreseen, some persons have endeavoured to give any meaning to our Lord's words but that which is the true one. Thus some say that the command—"tell it unto the Church," means, "tell it unto the Diocesan Bishop,"—"tell it to the Archbishop,"—"tell it to the Archdeacon,"—"tell it to the Proctors of the Ecclesiastical Court,"—"tell it to the Pope,"—tell it,

in short, to any person or persons, excepting those whom our Lord would indicate. Dr. Owen appears to me to have spoken well on this passage:—
“ There have been so many contests about the sense of these words, and the interpretation of them; so many reasons and opposite opinions about them, and those debated in such long and operose discourses, that some would take an argument from thence, that nothing can be directly proved from them, nor any certain account of the state and duty of the Church be thence collected. But nothing can be insinuated more false and absurd, nor which more directly tendeth to the overthrow of the whole authority of the Scripture: for if when men are seduced by their interests, or otherwise, to multiply false expositions of any place of Scripture, and to contend earnestly about them, making them thereby lose unto us their instructive power and certain determination of truth, we should quickly have no bottom or foundation for our faith in the most important articles of religion, nor could have so at this day. But all the various pretences of men, some whereof would have the Pope, others a general council, some the civil magistrates, some the Jewish Synagogue, some a company of arbitrators, are nothing but so many instances of what interest, prejudice, corrupt lusts, ambitious designs, with a dislike of the truth, will bring forward. To me it seems strange that any impartial man, reading this context, can take the

Church in this place in any other sense but for such a society, as whereunto an offending and offended brother or disciple of Christ might and ought to belong, to the body whereof they might address themselves for relief and remedy, or the removal of offences, by virtue of the authority and appointment of Jesus Christ."

You will, therefore, observe that, in this letter, I confine my objections generally to the misapplication of Church authority. In the Establishment the authority is with the King, or the Parliament, or the Bishops: in the Scriptures, the whole multitude of believers are called on to deliberate and to decide; and this appears to me so plain, that I despair of ever seeing those arguments whereby the true Church of England shall be proved to be the Church wherein the faith was first nursed.

I am, &c.

LETTER XX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

AFTER I had dispatched my last letter to you, I found I had omitted some things connected with the subject of Church authority, which are in my apprehension of too much importance to be passed over altogether; I must, therefore, send you the gleanings of my observations in this sheet; and though I fear you must think my letters very long and tedious, yet believe me I find it difficult to give you my objections in the compass of a letter, so much have I to say on these topics.

In the New Testament the admonitions of the Holy Spirit are all directed to believers, to the general body of the faithful, not to diocesan Bishops or Archdeacons, not to Archbishops or their officers. This being so, it follows of a certainty that the prelatical authority, or, in other words, that power whereby one man rules some hundred Churches with absolute sway, being styled their "Lord," and treated as their master, did not then exist.

Paul begins his Epistle to the Romans thus ·
“ To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints, grace to you and peace,” &c. ; not mentioning in the remotest manner any of those high dignitaries and stately officials who bear the whole authority in the Church of England. It is perfectly certain, therefore, that the Church of Rome was not the least like the Church of England when he wrote his Epistle, for had there been the body of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Archdeacons, Canons, Rectors, Vicars, and Curates, he certainly would have noticed them; but as such priestly dignitaries did not then exist, he could not mention them, excepting by the spirit of prophecy, which I think he has done in the Second Chapter of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, when he says, “ Let no man deceive you by any means, for the day of Christ shall not come *except there come a falling away first*, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” The man of sin was the mystery of iniquity in the Roman Catholic Church, from which, I believe, the Church of England has received these things and cherished them, though they are a most pernicious and ungodly heritage.

The other Epistles of Paul begin with similar salutations : “ Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth; to them that are sanctified, in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“ Paul unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in Achaia.” “ Paul an Apostle, *and all the brethren which are with me,* unto the Churches of Galatia.” “ Paul to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus ;” and so of the rest ; but never once does he direct his letters to a diocesan Bishop, as he ought to have done, had he been a true member of the Church of England, which my uncle Lucifer says he was. Now supposing the Church of Corinth had been like the Established Church, Paul would have thus written the salutation :— “ Paul to the Right Reverend Father in God the Lord Bishop of Corinth. My Lord, inasmuch as your lordship has been consecrated Bishop of the diocese of Corinth, I direct this Epistle to your lordship,” &c. &c. This is the style in these days : it therefore either was extremely incorrect in Paul to neglect the Episcopal authority, and to write to the whole body of believers about the state of their Churches ; or else the Prelates of the establishment are usurpers and tyrants, part of the man of sin, “ whose coming has been, after the working of Satan, with all power and lying wonders.”

The testimony of Scripture is always sufficient for me, nor do I covet any assistance from the Fathers, or Ecclesiastical tradition ; nevertheless, as you and my uncle Lucifer often press this sort of authority upon my consideration, allow me to

remind you, that Clemens Romanus, whose Epistle to the Corinthians has great authority with some, owing to its antiquity, and the simplicity of its primitive spirit, knew of no other Church government than that which Paul recognised. His Epistle begins thus,—“The Church of God which dwelleth at Rome, to the Church of God which dwelleth at Corinth.” The believers in one city write to the believers in another, in the same way that the brethren of the Church of Antioch determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, should go up to Jerusalem and consult the Apostles and Elders.

From the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians (supposing it to be really written by Ignatius, which is very doubtful) we learn that the whole Church had the power to elect the overseers, who are now called “Bishops,” in Popish language. “It becometh you as the Church of God to choose an overseer, who may perform the embassy of God, that it may be granted unto them to be gathered together in one place, and to glorify the name of God* ;” for the more I read the records of primitive Christianity, the more do I meet with proofs of an authority vested in the whole body of believers, which is quite unknown in the Established Church.

The testimonies to this truth are superabundantly

* Πρεπον εστιν υμιν ως εκκλησια Θεου χειροτονησαι επισκοπον, εις το πρεσβυτουμεν εις Θεου πρεσβυταν εις το συγχωρηθηναι αυτους εις το αυτο γενομενους, και δοξασαι το ονομα του Θεου.

numerous, and indeed it seems conceded that the body of Christians for a long time exercised the privilege of electing the Church officers—even after the time when something like diocesan Episcopacy had come into fashion. One passage to this effect I will quote from Cyprian, because, though the writings of this father use a very lordly and prelatical language, yet they still bear testimony to the primitive power of the body of believers—“nor* let *the people* (*plebs*, all the faithful, called in Greek *πληθος*,) flatter themselves as though they could be free from the taint of sin when they communicate with a priest who is a sinner, and when they give their consent to the authority of an unjust and lawless overseer; because *the people*, obeying the precepts of our Lord, and fearing God, ought to separate themselves from a sinful overseer, nor have anything to do with the sacrifices of an impious priest; since they, the people, *have especially the power either of electing worthy priests, or rejecting those who are unworthy*: which privilege we see has descended from Divine authority.”

* Nec sibi plebs blandiatur, quasi immunis esse à contagio delicti possit cum sacerdote peccatore communicans, et ad injustum et illicitum præpositi sui episcopatum consensum suum commodans. Propter quod plebs obsequens præceptis dominicis et Deum metuens à peccatore præposito separare sedebet, nec ad sacrilegi sacerdotis sacrificia miscere, quando ipsa maximè habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recessandi, quod et ipsum videmus de Divinâ auctoritate descendere!

This specimen of the sentiments which may be brought forward by referring to the Fathers, ought to keep all the Clergy of the Established Church close to the Scriptures ; for though the Fathers were very fond of enlarging the power of the newly-invented Priesthood, yet they had no idea of such a Church as we have in England ; so that I am sure more harm than good will come to the prelatical party by sending down to Egypt for help. The Scriptures are against the Church of England ; but the Fathers still more so. The Scriptures whip the Establishment with whips, but the Fathers with scorpions.

I am sorry, my dear uncle, that my uncle Lucifer, the renowned author of the Letters of L. S. E., should have committed himself in some passages of his immortal epistles. I beg you to compare some of his words in the Seventh of his Letters with those words which I have just quoted from Cyprian. My uncle says, “ Should they, the Clergy, do anything which we humbly think is not right, we, as private Christians, are not to judge them, but leave them till the Lord, whose servants they are, calls them to give an account of their stewardship. No private Christian can take upon him to find fault with God’s Ministers without great arrogance, presumption, and spiritual pride. It ought to be concluded, that as they have more learning—have had more experience, and have the presence of Christ with

them, according to the promise he made them, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,' that they are far better capable of judging with respect to spiritual things than private Christians*," &c. "When a private Christian sees anything wrong in a Priest he ought to submit—he had better be a little uneasy himself than disobey those who have the rule over him†." So says my illustrious uncle; but Cyprian says it is sinful to communicate with a sinner-priest; that the people (*plebs*) have the power of electing and ousting the Clergy, and that this power has descended to the people from Divine authority! It is very painful to me to see Cyprian pitted against my uncle, for, in such a jostle, it is evident that the weaker must go to the wall.

Thus, in taking a general view of the Church of England, and in comparing it with the first Churches of Christianity, I can find nothing but dissimilarity. In the early churches there was a spiritual union among believers, who were persons admitted into the company of the faithful by a general consent of the whole Church approving their faith, and accepting their signs of godly repentance. The Church consisted of "the Elect, the Saints, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called the holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling—heirs of God by adoption and grace—sons

* Letters of L. S. E. p. 217.

† Ibid. 221.

of God by faith in Jesus Christ—men who had escaped the pollution of the world by the knowledge of Christ—a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people—children of light—not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble—men of prayer, faith, patience, joy and peace in believing.” The union of the brethren in the bonds of redeeming love was what the Apostles aimed at: all their monitions were about spiritual matters; they toiled and preached among them to keep them in a holy, simple, patient frame of mind, and we hear nothing in the Gospel days of all those wretched and disgraceful clamours about tithes and money, in which the Church of England is now mainly occupied.

In the Church of England all is coldness, formality, exterior profession, and revolting worldliness. As for Church union, or the communion of Saints, it cannot be said to exist. Every canonically baptized individual in the country, not openly professing Dissent, is considered a regenerated Christian, a member of the Church of England. All Mayors and Aldermen, and all Magistrates (not professed Dissenters) are the shining Saints of the Established Church; they often take the Sacrament, and are very zealous about the Church as by law established. Soldiers are marched in platoons to church; every man and woman, however infamous their lives, are

members, if they choose it, of *this* Church : there is no discipline, no distinction, no separation. The Church is loved by angry politicians, by Orangemen, by furious Tories, by all the sons of darkness, by all the admirers of Don Miguel and of Charles X. The Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Cumberland, and the Marquess of Londonderry, are “the dear brethren” of this Church. It is defended by squadrons of lancers, regiments of foot soldiers, and detachments of the police. The preachers of its Gospel violently take money from their flock in pitch battles, with all the implements of war—bugles, bayonets, and bullets. We hear* of fourteen men killed, and twenty wounded, in a tithe-battle ; we hear of a whole province up in arms to combat him who comes to publish the glad tidings of salvation. In short, the Church of England is a public calamity, a breeder of strife and tumult, an instrument of rapacity and merciless oppression. Its wealth is as enormous as it is disproportionate. Five millions per annum, amongst sixteen thousand Priests, are so distributed as to leave three or four thousand in abject poverty. Thus, in taking a general view of the Established Church, it is almost impossible for any person, seriously and *honestly*, to come to the conclusion that it is indeed the Church of Christ ; or if, indeed, any man should, after much reading

* The battle of Rathcormac, fought for an Archdeacon's tithes.

and consideration, profess to come to the conclusion, then must he be considered as a victim of dark superstition, and as much under a delusion as those members of the Romish persuasion who can wink at idolatry, and even admire the cruelties of the Inquisition.

I have thus freely expressed my opinion of the Established Church on a general view of its workings, and have come to the conclusion, that it is an invention of men, which can claim no respect from true believers. In my next, I hope to proceed to some minor matters, and to handle them in that plain way which you have kindly permitted

Your dutiful Nephew.

LETTER XXI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

PERHAPS it is superfluous now to express my sentiments respecting Confirmation, seeing that, in obedience to your positive and reiterated commands, I have submitted to that Popish ceremony; but, as it is a rite contained in the Prayer-Book, and as I intend now to bring forward my scruples regarding many things contained in the Prayer-Book, I will begin with the subject of Confirmation.

My first objection to Confirmation is the solemn mockery and nonsense of the ceremony. Let me quote from the Prayer-Book: "Then shall the Bishop say, Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and do all those things which *your godfathers and godmothers* then undertook for you?" This, of course, takes me back to my baptism, when I, a little baby, was sprinkled with water, not knowing what they were doing to me.

Here the Prayer-Book tells me that the Priest put this question to my godfathers,—“Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of them, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them? Ans.—*I renounce them all.*”

Now, in the first place, I would ask, in what part of Scripture this institution of godfathers and godmothers is to be found? Who can prove to me from the Bible that adults are to stand proxy for babies against Satan? Who can, by any thing like a *Protestant* argument, show that *A* is to promise for *B*, that *B* shall not be a sinner? Surely, no honest man can defend such manifest nonsense by any reasoning worth listening to; for, on the very face of it, the whole fabric of proxy-regeneration and subsequent Confirmation is a mere invention of superstitious persons, endeavouring to escape a difficulty of their own creating.

But, I ask, did my godfathers and godmothers renounce “the Devil, and the vain pomps and glories of the world, with all the covetous desires of them, and the carnal desires of the flesh,” for themselves or for me? but, if they themselves had not renounced the Devil and the world, could their promise be acceptable as a sort of a deposit, whilst they themselves were notoriously not doing what they promised I should do? I do not wish to say

anything disrespectful of my godfathers and godmothers, but you know very well, my dear uncle, that my godfather, Mr. D——, is one of the greatest misers in the county; he, therefore, certainly has not renounced “the covetous desires of the world;” neither has my godmother, Mrs. B——, renounced the pomps and vanities, for she has come into possession of a large fortune from a distant relation, and is one of the most pompous and vain ladies I ever saw. She certainly has been very kind to me, and has sent me 20*l.* to purchase books at Cambridge; but you know better than I do how completely this great lady is eaten up with vanity, and how she studies the fashions in her dress, furniture, carriages, and equipages. What, then, has become of my soul in the keeping of Mr. D—— and Mrs. B—— till I came to the Bishop for my confirmation? These questions, and many more of the same sort, I might press upon you; but I refrain, for there is an appearance of irreverence in drawing these conclusions, which, however, are inevitable on closely examining this foolish institution.

I must, however, further remark, that my baptism professed to make me so complete, that this proxy-righteousness must be wholly unnecessary. The Thanksgiving, after I was baptized, was thus: “We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, and

to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him in thy holy Church." Surely, these privileges are all that are known in the faith of Christians; for regeneration, adoption, and incorporation are the whole sum of those distinguishing graces whereby the elect are separated from the world? It seems, however, that the Bishop thought he could do something more for me at my Confirmation, for he laid his hands upon my head, "to certify to me by that sign of the favor and gracious goodness of God towards me;" for, in fact, the ceremony of Confirmation is taken from the Popish ritual, and is supposed to confer "*the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost*;" and it cannot be denied that, according to the Prayer-Book, the Bishops can confer the Holy Spirit by the touch of their hands, as is evident by the form of ordaining Priests and Deacons and consecrating Bishops.

The question of Confirmation was solemnly proposed to the Bishops in the reign of Henry VIII., and it is much owing to their decision that we have this Popish ritual in our Prayer Book. Thus was the question put: "Whether Confirmation, *cum chrismate*, of them that be baptized be found in Scripture?" Now, this *chrism* was the anointing the person confirmed with cream; and much do I marvel that the Church of England has rejected "the cream of the matter;" for unquestionably cream had as good a right to keep its place as any thing else which we have to bear in Confirmation.

The then Bishop of London thus answered the question—and I prefer selecting his answer, because the Bishops of London must ever be dear to the Gathercoal family,—“ I find, in Scripture, *imposition of hands* in many places, which I think, considering the usage commonly and so long withal used, *to be Confirmation*, and that WITH CHRISM to supply the visible appearance of the * * *, which * * * was so visibly seen in the primitive Church*.”

The Bishop of Carlisle answered to the same effect. “ The imposition of hands, the holy Doctors take for the same which we call Confirmation, done upon them which were christened before, whereof is written in the Acts. And as for *chrism*, it should seem by Cyprian, both as touching the confection and usage thereof, *that it hath great ground to be derived out of Scripture*, though it be not manifestly spoken therein.”

The Archbishop of York answered, “ The outward sign is the imposition of hands done by the Bishop, and the graces conferred be the graces called the seven gifts of the * * *.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Crammer) saw farther than his superstitious brethren, and gave such an answer as clearly indicated his contempt of the whole ritual. “ The Bishop, in the name of the Church, doth invoke the * * *, so that the efficacy of this Sacrament is of such value

* See Collier's and Burnet's Records.

as is the prayer of the Bishop in the name of the Church." In other words, if the Bishop liked to pray for grace on those confirmed he might, and what his prayers could effect would follow, *and nothing more.*

In the Popish ritual, from which our service is slightly altered, there is this form of words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" after which, cream is poured forth as an unction on the person confirmed, and unquestionably this chrism is a very ancient symbol, for Augustin says of it, "that the Sacrament of chrism amongst visible Sacraments is holy, as Baptism is."*

Thus it is clear, my dear uncle, what Confirmation really is—a Popish ceremony, invented to help a theory, and to save appearances; a mere idle figment of men, which may indeed add to the power of the Prelates, by making young people look up to them as givers of grace; but is unworthy of respect from those who admit the Scriptures as their only rule of faith.

You will say, perhaps, that Confirmation is a slight matter; and contemptible enough it is, I grant: but still it is found in the Prayer Book; and, in theory, all who communicate at the Lord's Supper are supposed to have been previously

* Sacramentum Chrismatis in genere visibilibus Sacramentorum, est Sacrosanctum, sicut et baptisma.

confirmed ; so that it is impossible to evade the difficulty by thus slightly passing it over as a matter of no consequence. For if I were ever to be a Clergyman, I must swear before God that I heartily accept, and unfeignedly believe, everything in the Prayer Book ; that I give my unfeigned assent, and consent, to everything therein contained ; which I could not do as long as I entertained any doubts about any one page ; nay, any one sentence in that volume. There are, however, many parts of the Prayer Book which seem to me highly objectionable ; and the office for Confirmation is one ; on which, having now offered you my observations, I shall conclude this letter.

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE position in which the Clergy of the Establishment are placed, with regard to the people, is such as cannot be assumed in the Church of Christ. The Clergy are *Priests*, having derived their office and functions and title from the Church of Rome; but for this office, function, and title there is no authority in Scripture; which nowhere teacheth that the preachers of the Gospel should inherit by metastasis the name and privileges of the Levitical caste.

There is amongst members of the Church of England a confused and uncertain opinion on the sacerdotal character of the Clergy, which would be surprising if we did not trace it to its right source,—the struggles made by common sense against the barriers of superstition and the decrees of the Prayer Book. The High Church prelatial Clergy are pretty generally agreed amongst themselves that they are in the fullest sense of the word *Priests*; in which opinion they are also joined by the Evangelical clergy.

It matters not, however, what they think or do

not think on the subject; for the Prayer Book, to which they are chained down by many oaths, speaks too plainly to be misunderstood on the subject. The pious Clergy may gloss over these things, as they do also some other stumbling-blocks—such as baptismal regeneration; but after all they say and write on these topics, they cannot persuade disinterested persons to agree with their forced interpretations, until the English language shall be altered, and new meaning given to words.

A clergyman then is, by the Prayer Book, a *Priest*; a new-coined Levite from the Mint of Rome, and has, by the Pope's institute, full power of remitting sin, as is manifest in his Ordination Service; which directs the Bishop to say to the Priest at his ordination, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the inspiration of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

A Priest is a person consecrated and set apart, by peculiar ceremonies and ordinations, to perform atoning services for the people in the worship of God, which service none but a Priest can perform.

This being the true and pure idea of a Priest, I say that in the Church of Christ there is no Priest but Christ himself, who is a Priest for ever, after

the order of Melchiscdek ; and who is passed into the Heavens, into that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man : and the Gospel names no other Priest but Him ; therefore it is a daring act of usurpation and deception for any set of men calling themselves Christians to take upon themselves this abolished office.

The Book of Leviticus is a code of sacerdotal functions, describing chiefly the duties of the Priests, which they were to perform *for* the people, and in *their stead* ; “ the Priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice and offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord,”—“ the Priest shall make an atonement for the people,”—“ the Priest shall offer every man’s burnt offering,”—“ the Priest shall minister in the Sanctuary,” &c., is the language of this book throughout.

Now it requires but a very slight knowledge of Christian theology to know that a Priesthood, in the Levitical sense, was never instituted by our Lord or the Apostles ; not one word has been dropped by the Founder of the Christian religion whereby it could be surmised that he wished the preachers of the Gospel to be Priests ; or that he gave them the exclusive privilege of administering the Sacraments,—of standing at an altar in white robes,—of helping themselves first to the Eucharistic elements,—of standing with the elements in his hands whilst the people kneeled,—of absolving

from sin,—and of repeating certain prayers which the Deacon and people have no right to repeat.

Our Lord never intimated his desire that the preachers of the Gospel should be called “Reverend,” “Right Reverend,” “Very Reverend,” “Reverend and Venerable,” “Most Reverend,” &c. He never taught us that we were to make a distinction between the “Clergy,” and “the Laity;” and that the term “spiritual persons,” in the sense we technically understand it, should be applied to a caste of priests. He ordered not any set of men to take the name of “*Clergy*,” and to remit sin; in short, he never directed the Church to have a Priesthood, a sacerdotal caste, takers of tithes, and priesting it for the people: if therefore we do in any supposed Christian Church find such institutions, we find a rank heresy, an enormous defection from the purity of the Gospel, over which all good men ought to lament, and from which all good men should escape, lest they be plagued with the plagues of the beast.

To say anything about the Roman Catholic Priesthood is superfluous, for the pretensions of that corporation are notorious; without a Priest nothing can be done in the Popish worship; the Priest says and does everything; he prays; he supplicates; he fumigates; he deprecates; he absolves from sin; he changes the bread into the real presence; he averts divine wrath; he blesses, and he curses. The office of mediator is his

without disguise or circumlocution; for instance, in the confiteor of the mass, where the people say these words:—"Therefore, I beseech Mary, always a Virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, *and thee, O Father* (addressing themselves to the Priest) to pray for me to our Lord God."

The English Prayer Book has thrown overboard the Saints, but kept the Priest, as in this Rubric of the morning and evening service, "the absolution or remission of sins to be pronounced by the *Priest* alone, standing; the people kneeling." The people are to be on their knees whilst the Priest absolves them from sin in the attitude of a superior,—a gross institution of Popish usurpation, and a part of that tree of evil, the ripe fruit of which is to be seen in the elevation of the Host. It should moreover be noticed that if the officiating clergyman should happen not to be in Priests' orders, as they call it, he must not presume to pronounce the absolution, but must content himself with a collect in its place.

Some persons wish to do away with the force of this superstition by pleading, that the absolution is, after all, only a declaration of a Gospel doctrine; but if this be the *whole truth* in the matter, why then may not the Deacon declare a simple Gospel truth as well as a Priest? And what mean the words addressed to the Priest at his ordination,

“ whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained ?”

There is, however, a grosser superstition still in the Prayer Book ; for in the Visitation of the Sick, the Priest is directed to absolve the sick person in this form of words :—“ By the authority of Jesus Christ, *committed to me*, I absolve thee from all sins, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

If a clergyman believes he has this power, he certainly ought to seek orders in the Roman Catholic Church.

I know very well that the Evangelical Clergy plead that they never use this formulary. “ We disapprove of it,” they say ; “ we never think of pronouncing these words to the sick whom we visit : unless it can be proved that we do, it is unhandsome to charge us with a doctrine which we reject.”

The answer to this subterfuge is obvious ; for if the Evangelical clergy disapprove of this formulary and never use it, then must they be guilty of a gross falsehood ; for besides the subscription to the three articles before ordination, wherein they solemnly promised never to use any other form of prayer than that which the Prayer Book prescribes, they did also make this declaration on taking possession of their benefices,—“ I, A. B., do hereby declare *my unfeigned assent and consent to all*

and every thing contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, and administration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England." The words of this declaration are so strictly drawn, that it is impossible by any ingenuity to evade them; the persons who framed it knew what they were about; their object was to make a trap from which no conscience, however slippery, should be able to escape: if, therefore, a clergyman do not approve and use the rites prescribed in the Prayer Book, he is unquestionably practising a deceit; he shows by his conduct that he rejects that which he solemnly declared he received with unfeigned assent and consent; and in truth every clergyman who thus sets aside the Prayer Book not only is a Dissenter but a traitor to his Church, and should be ejected from the priesthood, and deprived of his benefices. I may have more to say in another letter on this "Declaration," but my present business is only with the absolution prerogative, that great test of the mediatorial character with which our clergy are invested.

I have said that there is no authority for the term "spiritual persons" as applied to a Christian caste of Priests; no term, however, is more in vogue amongst us, though the origin of the phrase is to be found in the court of Rome, and not in the word of God. By Scripture testimony, those and those only are spiritual persons who are

“born of the Spirit,” and who are taught of God to walk in the Spirit, that they may not fulfil the “lusts of the flesh;” “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;” and Peter, speaking generally to believers says, “Ye are built up a spiritual house.” Thus in numerous passages of Scripture it is declared that all believers are spiritual persons, but not the most remote hint is given us that there is to be a clergy called “spiritual persons,” as distinguished from the laity. In fact, the words *clergy and laity*, in the sense we use them, are Popish and Brahminical terms, full of darkness and lies.

Thus, in a similar manner, whilst I can find that believers are the only spiritual persons recognised in Scripture, so also can I see no other priesthood in the Gospel than such as is attributed to the whole company of the faithful. The Apostle Peter says to the Church generally, “Ye are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices;” and so of the Church triumphant we read in the book of Revelations the following testimony,—“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ.” In vain shall a man look for any other priesthood than this in the Gospel; so that whilst the Scriptures declare that

all believers are Priests by spiritual designation, and never once teach us anything about the clergy and their priestly prerogatives, is it not amazing to see men in these days who profess to derive their creed from the Bible not only setting aside the true priesthood recognised in Scripture, but submitting themselves to another caste of Priests invented by superstitious men in the days of darkness and ignorance?

The Epistle to the Hebrews is mainly written on the subject of the priesthood, but keeps a profound silence about Priest's orders, absolution from sin, and a priestly administration of sacraments. How strange then is this omission! who can account for it? When the matter in hand was the true priesthood of the Church, how wonderful to pass over entirely our priests, with their oaths of canonical obedience and prelatival consecration! With us and the Papists, the clergy conduct the whole worship of God; but in the inspired book which treats of the priesthood they are never once mentioned—never once thought of—not so much as a passing word in their favour!

The Apostle Paul says, "for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Here one would think our clergy are sure to be mentioned, for if the levitical priesthood is changed, it follows of necessity that the priesthood now in fashion must be brought forward, otherwise they cannot be a true

priesthood. They are not, however, noticed, for this is the change spoken of, "for he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah;" and again, "they truly were many Priests, because they were not sufficed to continue by reason of death; but this man (Christ), because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."—Heb. vii.

Now the Church, the whole body of believers being united to the Lord, being one spirit with him, are Priests; they are "a chosen generation—a royal priesthood—an holy nation—a peculiar people—that they might show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light."—1 Pet. ii.

Archbishop Leighton, the author of the celebrated commentary on Peter's first Epistle, is bold enough to use these words,—“All believers are God's clergy,” which not only is sound and pure doctrine, but is a condemnation of that caste of Priests who now usurp and appropriate privileges to which they can make out no better title than is given them by the mass-book, the canon law, and the Prayer Book.

It is therefore clear to me that all the functions of priestly authority now claimed and exercised by the clergy of the Established Church are unscriptural and superstitious. I deny the right of

any Christian to call himself a Priest in distinction from his believing brethren ; I deny his exclusive right of administering the sacraments—his power of absolution*—his claim to tithes—his title to reverence, and every other part and parcel of his privileges now unhappily visible amongst us. I look upon his office as a figment and an imposture, and in one word I totally deny, reject, and repudiate the priesthood of the Church of England.

Yours, &c.

* The form " Absolve te" was not introduced till the time of Thomas Aquinas; before his day the form of absolution was nearly in the form of a prayer or a declaration of doctrine.

LETTER XXIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE eulogies bestowed on the Prayer Book might almost prevent me from venturing to say anything against a volume which "sitteth in the temple of God, showing itself that it is God;" but though the sect of its idolaters are very numerous, and some of them very devout, yet this shall not prevent me from investigating the merits of their image, in which I see a great deal that is not only human but anti-christian and profane. It is indeed well gilded, but I know that it is only an idol in spite of its solemn and imposing appearance.

The praises liberally bestowed on *the language and composition* of the Prayer Book I may be inclined to let pass; for the purity of its idiom, the harmony of its cadences, and the dignity of its expressions concern me not at all, and that for three reasons. 1. Language in itself has no claim to our religious respect; we are not like the Mahometans, who appeal to the language of the Koran as a proof of its inspiration; let the style of the Prayer Book be what it may, it cannot in that respect have more claim to our reverence than the

style of Shakspeare, or of Milton's prose works, or than the style of any of our older writers who wrote in a more terse and vigorous idiom than is now used. 2. Much of the beauty of the Prayer Book language depends on the Latin prayers composed by Popes and Cardinals ; a literal translation of a nervous and condensed Latin must needs produce a nervous and condensed English. 3. Most of the writers of the age when the Prayer Book was composed wrote pure English ; the Saxon words in those days prevailed over the Roman.

With these passing remarks I will let the "excellent language" of the Prayer Book pass, only noticing that this language is best where it keeps close to the Latin ; in the few passages where the Prayer Book has left the Mass-book or Breviary the style is not so good ; as, for instance, in the opening exhortation of the morning and evening service we have a continued tautology in every sentence which no sound critic could recommend ; "to acknowledge and confess," "sins and wickednesses," "dissemble and cloke," "assemble and meet together," "requisite and necessary," "pray and beseech," &c. But I pass on to more important matters.

The Prayer Book is notoriously compiled from the Mass-book and Breviary ; and indeed it was the avowed intention of those who constructed this volume to keep so near the formularies then in vogue that the Catholics might be tempted to

acquiesce in the new Church of England. Bishop Hall has thus spoken on the subject: "If any man will now say that our Prayer Book is taken out of the mass, let him know rather that the mass was cast out of the Prayer Book, into which it was injuriously and impiously intruded. The good of those prayers are ours in the right of Christians, the evil that was in them let them take as their own; if a *piece of gold* be offered to us, will we not take it because it was taken out of the channel?" These words I quote for the acknowledgment they contain of the Prayer Book's origin; the argument of the good Bishop is indeed a sophism, and the assertion that the mass was cast out of the Prayer Book, if meant as anything but a flourish of words, is a mere fable; all the parts of the Prayer Book not found in Roman Catholic authorities are modern inventions, the oldest not more than two hundred and fifty years, and many of them younger by a century. That which is the continent cannot be cast out of that which it contains.

Bishop Stillingfleet in his *Irenicum* speaks to this purpose: "The great reason why our first reformers did so far comply with the Papists was to gain and lay a bait for them, though I hope it was never intended as a hook for the Protestants."

We have the acknowledgment and grant of two kings, James I. and Charles II., that the public

worship and service of the Protestant Church of England contained in the English Liturgy is the same in the main body and essentials, chief materials, frame and order, with that of the Popish worship; and whoever will take the trouble to search into the Popish Breviary, Ritual, Missal, and Pontifical, which four comprehend their whole liturgy, will find, though there are some variations and alterations, yet the substance, chief material, and order are the same, and that our Prayer Book is taken from the Roman Catholic service—collects, matins, even-songs, epistles, gospels, creeds, litanies, consecration, administration of sacraments, baptism of infants, with godfathers and godmothers, kneeling at the altar; confiteor, absolution, burial, matrimony, visitation of the sick, ordination of Priests and Deacons, consecration of Archbishops, Bishops, &c.

These six canticles are word for word from the mass-book: “Benedicite opera omnia,” “Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel,” “Magnificat anima mea,” “Nunc dimitis,” “Quicumque vult,” “Te Deum laudamus,” with “Gloria Patri,” directed to be repeated frequently and after every psalm; besides the “*Pater Noster*,” to be five times repeated before the service of the Lord’s day is completed*.

* Would it not be better to repeat the Lord’s prayer five times *consecutively*? It would come nearer to the Popish pattern of saying beads, and on that account would probably be more acceptable.—EDITOR.

Now in the canticle "Benedicite opera omnia" are some very strange things; "O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify his name for ever;" "O ye wells, bless the Lord;" "O ye whales," "O ye green things," "stars and moon," "showers and dew;" and then, to finish this odd assortment, "Ananias, Azarias, and Misael," for in fact the whole of the song is apocryphal; but whatever is its origin, and whatever its spirit, such as it is, every clergyman has sworn that he receives it with "unfeigned assent and consent."

The Prayer Book follows the Popish worship in numerous ceremonies; kneeling at confession and absolution, whilst "the Priest" is standing—repeating the sentences of "Pater Noster" after the Priest—standing up at "Gloria Patri"—standing whilst the Apostles' creed is repeated—repeating after the Priest, "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison"*—reading or singing "Quicumque vult," *i. e.* Athanasian creed—saying or singing litanies, with responses from the choir—kneeling at the altar during communion—reading the Ten Commandments by the Priest standing—whilst the people on their knees iterate the same prayer after each commandment—the alternate reading of the Psalm verses by Priest and people—sitting at the lessons—rising up again

* Lord have mercy upon us—Christ have mercy upon us—Lord have mercy upon us.

at canticles—bowing at the name of Jesus—turning to the East—singing anthems and solos—performing voluntaries on organs—wearing surplices, rochets, hoods, scarfs, square caps, and other trumpery prescribed to the clergy, either in the rubrics of the Prayer Book or in the canons. Now all this elaborate trifling and voluntary humility comes direct from the Church of Rome, which was many centuries in perfecting that Lexicon of superstitions which we have copied and translated in our Prayer Books.

Pope Gregory I. made that form of service which they call the Mass, and added many ceremonies unknown before. There was another mass called the Mass of Ambrose, and as much dispute had arisen about their respective merits, Pope Adrian, (about the year 800,) pretending to be divinely directed, decided for the Mass of Gregory. He prescribed the singing of Psalms in alternate parts as we have them in our Cathedrals. He commanded the singing Kyrie Eleison, or, as we have it, “Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us;” that “bowing and ducking of three Popish masquers to one another,” as Milton calls it.

The prescript number of Psalms and lessons came from the hand of Gregory VII. A. D. 1073.

The Absolution by the Priest from Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century, who also has

decided that the same honour is to be paid to an image in a Church as to Christ himself.

Peter Gnapheus, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 500, recommended the repetition of the Creed every time divine service was performed in public. The Popes took the hint, and we have obeyed the Popes. The Epistles and Gospels were by Pope Damasus; and Pope Anastasius ordered standing at the Gospel; and thus every part of the Prayer Book has been concocted by Popes or Popish Doctors, and all that we have in our public worship has received the impress of the Fisherman's seal.

From Rome also we have our Prayer Book calendar—Saint Prisca, 18th January; Bishop Fabian, 20th; Saint Agatha, 5th February; Valentine, 14th February; Saint Chad, 2d March; Abbot Benedict, Ambrose, Saint George, Saint Dunstan, and the Invention of the Cross, with many other such days, kept as holidays at Cambridge, and celebrated with surplices and additional ceremonies.

As you may not, my dear uncle, have a breviary at hand, I will here give you one of our prayers as it stands in the Popish service. "O God from whom all holy desires," &c. "Deus, a quo sancta desideria, recta consilia, et justa sunt opera; da servis tuis illam quam mundus dare non potest pacem, ut et corda nostra mandatis tuis dedita, et hostium sublatâ formidine, tempora sint tuâ pro-

tectione tranquilla per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.” *Ad vesperas.*

One specimen of the collects as they are in the breviary may also be instructive, for the collects are generally said to be the best part of the Prayer Book. Collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity:—“Deus, virtutum cujus est totum quod est optimum, insere pectoribus nostris amorem tui nominis, et præsta in nobis religionis augmentum, ut quæ sint bona nutrias, et, pietatis studio, quæ sunt nutrita custodias, per J. C. D. N.”

We thus find that we owe the very best of our scraps of prayers to the Popes, who, though they made unceasing war against the Lamb, could occasionally talk the language of Zion, that they might thus, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. Allow me to add now one of those collects which we have ungraciously rejected:—“O Lord God Almighty, who for the salvation of immortal souls didst ordain that the blessed Francis of Sales should make himself all things to all men, grant, we beseech thee, that we being endowed with the excellencies of thy love, may, through the direction of his counsels and the suffrage of his merits, attain unto everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

If, however, we have escaped from prayers of this sort, and that not without difficulty, we have taken good care to follow the Popish service in other passages without altering a syllable.

“*Priest.*—O Lord save the King.

“*People.*—And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.”

Who could have anticipated such a confusion of petitions? and who but the Popes would thus have thrown all things together *pell-mell*, as if anything was fish that came into their nets? In the same way we might couple the Queen’s name with our spiritual wants, and if it were in the Prayer Book it would meet with warm approbation from some people.

The last prayer of the morning service is headed thus—“A prayer of Saint Chrysostom,” which is in fact subscribing a hearty assent and consent to the canonizations of the Roman Chancery without the least authority from Scripture. Chrysostom may be a Saint at Rome and at Lambeth, for he has written with all his might to exalt the priesthood, but this same Saint also approved of offering *for the dead* alms with oblations; he preached up pilgrimages to Job’s dunghill, and talked all sorts of nonsense about holy water and other superstitious absurdities which I cannot stop here to recount.

The authorized prayers for the King are very offensive; for it is highly presumptuous in the humble act of prayer thus to make a display of worldly greatness, and, under the pretence of piety, to introduce an unconstitutional and slavish tone of politics. “O Lord our heavenly Father

the only Ruler of Princes," as a fact, in the government of Providence, is indeed true, as it is with every individual in the world; but in the sense here intended, that is to say, that no mortal man can rule a King, is not true; for we know very well that our Parliaments have not only ruled, but dethroned; not only dethroned, but beheaded reigning princes; they have ruled in a very masterly manner Edward II., Richard II., Mary Queen of Scots, Charles I., and James II. What they have done they can do again; nay, we have seen with our own eyes a King over-ruled in the matter of a Reform Bill and a reforming Ministry; and the instances are very frequent where Parliament has refused the wishes of reigning sovereigns. This language does not, therefore, suit the atmosphere of England; it suits only the hot-houses in which Prelates live, who have ideas and feelings, politics, and religion unknown to the rest of the nation.

The Prayer Book calls the King "our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King William,"—"our most gracious King and Governor,"—"most religious and gracious,"—and prays that he may "vanquish and overcome all his enemies." These swelling oriental titles and belligerent petitions are exceptionable anywhere, but in the worship of God they are profane; for in the House of Prayer the King is only a miserable sinner, who, with his people, must some day stand before the universal

judgment-seat in an awful equality with the lowest of his subjects ; and if we should search Scripture for a precedent, we should find indeed prayers relating to kings, but in a very different strain : as thus in the Prophet Daniel :—“ O Lord, the great and dreadful God we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and judgments : neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the Prophets, who spake in thy name to our kings, to our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land ! O Lord to us belongeth confusion of face, *to our kings, to our princes*, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee.”

The service for the thirtieth of January, “ being the martyrdom of the blessed King Charles the First,” is an outrageous stretch of impiety and servility. No language can be used against it too severe. There is nothing in the Mass-book or Breviary half so bad ; for though the Mass-book and Breviary do indeed exalt the merits of the Saints, yet they never have presumed to appropriate the atoning attributes and merits of Christ to a mortal, as is done without compunction in our Protestant Prayer Book. “ Form of prayer, *with fasting*, to be used yearly, upon the thirtieth of January, being the day of *the Martyrdom* of the blessed King Charles the First : to implore the mercy of God that *that sacred and innocent blood*

may never at any time hereafter be visited upon us, or our posterity.”

Thus do we see a very bad King, who, above all his contemporaries, was famed for falsehood and treachery; who was by painful experience so universally suspected of dissimulation, that no party dared trust him; who made no scruples to break the law of the land, and to commit acts of the grossest oppression without the least shame or remorse—converted into a *martyr*, that is, one who has sealed the truth of the faith of Christians by his death; one who has died for the truth; and thus are we commanded to keep the anniversary of his execution with a peculiar fast, lest peradventure the blood of this tyrant should be visited on our children to the uttermost generation!

But the order of the service is far more scandalous than the title. Instead of the “*Venite exultemus*,” the Priest and people read alternately a patch-work of verses culled from various parts of the word of God, and from the Apocrypha: the greater part of the selections from Scripture allude to Christ: as thus, “The people stood up, and the rulers took council together against the Lord and against his anointed,”—“the man of thy right hand, the son of man whom thou hadst made so strong for thyself,” &c. &c. The second lesson is the twenty-seventh of Matthew, which details the sufferings of our Lord. The Gospel for the Com-

munion Service is from Matthew xxi. 33 :—“ There was a certain householder ;” the well-known parable which our Lord gave to his disciples to point out the death he should die ; and amongst the impious prayers for this occasion, one of the sentences runs thus :—“ We magnify thy name for thine abundant grace bestowed upon our martyred Sovereign, by which he was enabled so cheerfully to follow the steps of his blessed Master and Saviour in a constant meek suffering,” &c.

Now if all the rest of the Prayer Book were free from the sad defects which abound in it everywhere, yet still this one service would be sufficient utterly to condemn it ; and they who praise our “ Scriptural Liturgy,” as if it were a volume taken out of the Ark of the Covenant, are bound to remember “ the form of prayer, with fasting, for King Charles the Martyr ;” and if they cannot perceive the impious strain of that ritual, and if they do not shrink under its weight, then must they indeed be blinded by the errors of a superstitious darkness.

In vain is it for a clergyman to say that he knows not this service ; for not only is he commanded to use it on the thirtieth of January every year, but he has thus made this solemn declaration, —“ I, A. B., do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to *all and everything* contained and prescribed in and by the book intituled the Book of Common Prayer.” He may indeed profess

ignorance of this service, and thus he never uses it; but this only proves him to be a deceiver, and that he is ready to swear to anything, or to make any declaration in order to become possessed of a benefice.

So much for the present: I shall have more to say about the Prayer Book in my next.

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXIV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE three Creeds, that called the Apostles', the Athanasian, and the Nicene, have been justly objected to from many quarters.

First, then, I notice that the Apostles' Creed, as it is called, (though it might just as well be called the Angels' Creed, if any matter of fact is intended by the title,) is a patch-work of man's invention, and that it is the accumulated gatherings of many centuries. About the fourth century a part of this Creed was used in the Churches, but it was not admitted into the Roman Church, complete, till the eighth century. "This Creed," says the learned Witsius, "was not the work of one man, or of one council, but in a course of ages several additions were made to it by different persons on various occasions."

Archbishop Usher, that diligent searcher of antiquity, has given us an account of the various additions which have at last been collected into one piece, such as we now read it: "Maker of heaven and earth" is a new addition—"conceived" is an addition, for in the old copies it stands "born of the Holy Ghost"—"dead" is

added—the words “Father Almighty” are added to “right hand”—“Catholic” is an addition to the word “Church,” and so also “communion of Saints and life everlasting” are tacked on to the more ancient form.

Bishop Burnet testifies “that every one of the first writers gives an abstract of his faith in words that differ both from one another and from this form. Hence, it is clear that there was no common form delivered to all the Churches. The first apologists for Christianity, when they delivered a short abstract of the Christian faith, do all vary from one another, both as to the order and as to the words themselves, which they would not have done if the Churches had received one settled form from the Apostles.”

This Creed is, in fact, like one of our modern acts of Parliament, a heap of additions piled one upon another to amend previous acts, which were previously amended by others that did themselves require amendment by antecedent acts, as the cunning of the lawyers discovered flaws in that which the legislators meant to be without fault.

Episcopus says, that the Apostolical Creed originally consisted merely of these words, “I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;” not that the Apostles, or those whom they had taught, did indeed draw up any set form of a Creed, but this was the faith which they taught and insisted on when preaching the Gospel.

Basnage says, the first clause of the Creed was put forth to oppose the Gnostics, who taught there were two Creators, or two demiurgical powers in the universe; "the remission of sins" was, according to this writer, meant to combat the Novatians, and the "descent into hell" the Arians; and so other clauses were added to oppose new heresies and to confound new sects.

Hence, we see the falsehood of the title, "the Apostles' Creed," which is a mere deception, meant to mislead the unlearned, and to persuade them that this meagre and heartless formulary was composed by the Apostles. They who know the unction and fervour with which the Apostles testify of the grace of God in Christ to sinners could never be brought to believe that they would have left this miserable legacy of faith to the Lord's people. A committee of the House of Commons, or the King's Attorney-General, would compose a creed like this; not so the Apostles, nor any man who enjoyed an interior view of the faith: it is a fit creed for a Church that has a mortal sinner for its supreme head. When, therefore, we read this rubric in the Prayer Book, "Then shall be sung or said the *Apostles' Creed* by the Minister and people standing," we read an untruth, and are directed to perform an act of childish superstition.

The article concerning "the descent into hell" has greatly perplexed the Protestants, and all sorts

of interpretations have been put forth, not one of which is satisfactory, or can be considered as conveying any intelligible information. Bishop Pearson has laboured hard at it, and much has he toiled to bring light out of darkness, and, after reciting a number of different interpretations and refuting them by turn, has given us what he calls "a safe account," but which, in fact, exactly leaves the inquirer where he was before, "that the soul of Christ separated from his body by death, went to the place where the souls of men are kept for their sins, and did wholly undergo the law of death;" but if we ask what this place is, the answer will be it is hell, which tells us nothing, excepting that hell is the place where the souls of sinners are, and this every body knew before.

Beza has given a totally different interpretation—and he stands in the highest place amongst divines—but none of the Protestant theologians who have discussed the subject are considered as having cleared up the mystery; and all this perplexity and error is the portion of the Church of England, because she has been pleased to insert in her service-book a profitless formulary of unknown writers, which has nothing but a supposed antiquity to recommend it. The truth seems to be, that this clause of the Creed is an invention of the fourth or fifth century, when the Church was far gone in superstition; for there is good evidence of an

old tradition, much believed amongst the Papists, that the soul of Christ walked down into hell, somewhere below the earth—that he was, indeed, in the place of torments, and preached the Gospel to the souls there confined—and that, by his preaching, the souls of many believed, were set at liberty, and went to heaven.

In the Gospel of Nicomedus, a forgery of the second century, it is asserted that Jesus having collected all the souls of the just, which were kept prisoners in hell till he went to preach to them, baptized them all in the holy river Jordan, as a necessary purification before they could enter into Paradise.

Theodore Albucara, a writer of the ninth century, holding that no one could be saved without baptism, and inquiring “how the dead, whom Jesus delivered from the prison of hell,” could have been baptized, supposes that the water which flowed from the Saviour’s side on the cross being resolved into its primary elements, baptized the elect Saints, who were waiting in prison the arrival of Christ, and that the state of their bodies was fitted for such a baptism.*

Now, these testimonies are sufficient to prove the existence of the tradition; so that, knowing the origin of the Creed, and how it has been built up by superstitious men, we can readily perceive that “the descent into hell” is a tra-

* See Cotelarius, and Fabricius, B. G. ix. 176.

dition of purgatory. We need not, with this very plain interpretation, now wonder at the perplexity of our Protestant Episcopalians, who, finding the Creed on their hands, are bound to support it; though, sooner than make confession of purgatory, they would naturally give the clause any other interpretation, or, if no interpretation can be found, leave it in such doubt as if it could not be explained at all.

The third of the Thirty-nine Articles has riveted another chain to this dark clause, as if the founders of the Church of England had been fearful lest, peradventure, their favourite should slip out of their hands; for, not content with the assurance of the Creed, the article selects this clause out of all the others, and gives it a double validity, "As Christ died for us and was buried, so also is it to be believed that he went down into hell."—Having propounded the riddle, and left it as a legacy to the Church of England for ever, they very prudently abstain from offering any explanation; and we may be quite sure that, to the end of time, no explanation ever will be agreed upon by Protestants, till they admit that the doctrine of purgatory is intended in this clause, in which case they must either renounce their religion or give up the Prayer Book.

Now, we must remember, that whether the disputed clause is taken as superstitious or as unintelligible, yet, such as it is, it forms a part

of the daily service of the Church of England—that sick and dying persons are questioned if they unfeignedly believe the Creed,* that it is taught children in the Catechism, and that all clergymen have given their “unfeigned assent and consent” to it, though neither dying man nor woman, neither Bishop nor child, neither Priest nor Deacon, can clearly explain what they believe when they come to this clause! Thus, without inquiry, do we follow the traditions which we have received from our fathers.

The opinion now generally entertained amongst the clergy is, that “Hell” in the clause means *Hades*, which, as it makes obscurity more obscure, is gladly embraced by them. Hades, they say, is the place of departed spirits, the unseen world; or they sometimes decline giving any definition, assuring us merely that Hades is Hades. If we inquire what “the unseen world” is, or where it is, or how it is described in Scripture, or on what authority we are called on to believe in any place for spirits but Hell or Heaven, we can receive no information, and there the matter must rest. Some, however, think that Hades means Paradise, and, if that be true, then are we come to this strange discovery, that Hell and Paradise are the

* “Here the Minister shall rehearse the articles of the faith, saying thus, ‘Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty,’ &c. &c. [going through the whole Creed.] The sick person shall answer, ‘ALL THIS I STEDFASTLY BELIEVE.’”—*Visitation of the Sick.*

same thing, for the clause in question says, "He descended into Hell," which we are told is Paradise! Supposing, then, that Hell means Paradise, how did the compilers of the prayer discover that the way to Paradise is *downwards*, when the Apostle says he was caught *up* into Paradise? Let the clergy extricate themselves out of these absurdities as they can.

The attachment to this clause is nevertheless very great; for in the year 1785, the representatives of the American Episcopal Church being desirous to have some elect Bishops consecrated by those who were *supposed* to be the legitimate successors of the Apostles, applied to the dignitaries of the Establishment for that purpose. The English Bishops complained that the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds were excluded from the American Prayer Books; and *the descent into hell from the Apostles' Creed*. This remonstrance was so far attended to by the American Clergy, that the Nicene Creed was restored, and *the descent* was by a considerable majority readmitted into its former situation, but the Athanasian Creed was permanently rejected.

The Athanasian Creed, which the Episcopals of America could not digest, is now a great favourite in certain quarters, and for this reason apparently, that it is written in a wrathful, dictatorial, and disputatious style; exactly suited to the clerical mind, which loves to dogmatise and

threaten in the same breath. "Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." What swelling and contumelious words! What blustering and bullying of a petulant controversialist! This threat, however, might have been expressed more briefly thus:—"Whoever does not belong to the Athanasian party shall be damned."

I must observe here that Pearson, Usher, Hammond, L'Estrange, Cave, Pagi, Du Pin, and others, are all agreed that Athanasius was not the author of this Creed; it was composed at the close of the fifth century, and the first person who called it Athanasian was Theodulphus Aurelianensis, A. D. 794. The Council of Autun ordered it to be read A. D. 670.

It is, therefore, a production of dark and superstitious times, when all was confusion and violence in the Church, and when faction and party spirit drowned with their clamour the mild but persuasive voice of Gospel truth.

This ferocious Creed never once makes an appeal to the word of God—the Scriptures are contemptible in its eyes—it spins its spider web out of its own bowels. How different is the language and spirit of the Scriptures:—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Where can we find the least resemblance

to the angry and perplexing tone of this Creed in any part of the New Testament? Where can we find even its sentiments? For though it be true that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, the God Jehovah, yet never do we find the God of our faith thus displayed in the intricate propositions of Scholastic subtilty.

The doctrine intended to be conveyed in this Creed is never stated in Scripture as a mere speculative dogma, but in connexion with our faith and obedience (as in Eph. ii. 18); and in every respect the Athanasian Creed must be considered not an elucidation and a defence, but a caricature and distortion of the truth: for though it undertakes to define the truth with marvellous accuracy, and to hedge it in with a barrier of curses, yet it is totally silent about repentance, and the sure hope of a trembling sinner: it says not a syllable concerning justification by faith,—nor of the new covenant; but having talked loudly about a hard mystery, leaves the uneonsoled inquirer to tremble before an inaccessible God.

And yet see the inconsistency of the compilers of the Prayer Book! They have insisted on the Athanasian Creed as a part of Christian worship, but have omitted to give it a place in the most important passage of all, the Visitation of the Sick and the Dying. The faith required of a dying man by the Prayer Book is the faith contained *in the Apostles' Creed*, in which the doctrines of the Trinity and

the Atonement are totally omitted ; and in order to secure a certainty on the subject, the Apostles' Creed is broken up into an interrogatory form, and put as a question to the dying man. Hence it is clear that the dying man is not required to believe in the Trinity ; and yet, behold, the Athanasian Creed loudly declares, that if a man does not believe rightly and exactly about the Trinity, " without doubt he shall perish everlastingly !"

From these considerations we are led to the conclusion that the Athanasian Creed is merely the symbol of a party ; and as it attacks none of the strongholds of Satan in a sinner's heart, as it is without any searching application of the truth, and without any practical consequences, we need not wonder to see it in high favour with sundry violent churchmen*, who find in it a passport for their orthodoxy, and a shield for their sins.

I conclude with what I have to say on the subject by quoting the words of Mr. Riland : " so that we have three Creeds containing nothing

* April 29, 1721, Lord Willoughby de Broke, Dean of Windsor, a Priest and a Peer, brought in a bill for " the more effectual suppressing of blasphemy and profaneness." comprehending under that description a denial of the Trinity as set forth by the Thirty-nine Articles. Persons convicted under this bill were to suffer perpetual imprisonment, unless they professed " that in the unity of the Godhead, there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This bill was countenanced by Archbishop Wake, and the bishops of London, Winchester, and Coventry. The bill was rejected by sixty against thirty-one.

whatever on original sin, the existence and effects of which are the cause why an atonement is needed; and with regard to the atonement itself, furnishing only a few desultory assertions, with no distinct application, and in two of the instances formally separating the 'forgiveness of sins from the only source of pardon.' " (Decus et Tutamen, p. 160.)

Having thus stated my objections to the matter of the Creeds, let me add a word on the manner in which they are to appear in the Churches. The rubric says that the Creeds are to be "sung or said;" "singing" has the precedence of "saying;" so that if the Church hath no fiddles, nor organs, nor bagpipes, nor sackbuts, no singing men, nor singing women, then the faithful may "say" what they cannot "sing." This makes the matter complete; for I can hardly imagine Christians in a more unseemly act of worship than when they are warbling the Athanasian Creed.

The ceremony of singing the Creeds was introduced by the Popes in the tenth century.

I am,

&c. &c.

LETTER XXV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

AMONGST the many "excellencies" of the Prayer Book, the Burial Service holds a conspicuous place. Rubric. "Then while the earth shall be cast upon the body, *the Priest* shall say:— 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we commit his body to the ground in *sure and certain hope* of the resurrection to eternal life;'"—and part of the prayer following is thus:—"We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, besecching thee that it may please thee shortly to accomplish *the number of thine elect.*"

The design of all this is too plain to be mistaken: the burial service declares that all who are buried are buried in a sure and certain hope of eternal life, and that they are of the number of the elect; and this is a compliment paid to every man, woman, and child, laid in our churchyards, without any discrimination or attempt at inquiry. Mr. Riland thus shows the difficulty of the service:—"If one of my parishioners should be killed in a

drunken quarrel, I shall be compelled in a few days verbally to include my own gratitude to God with that of the drunkard's family and friends, in these words, &c., but in point of fact I am astounded at the terrible reality that the man was cut off in a moment, in the very act of sin ; that he was hurried away from the miseries and guilt of a wicked life, into miseries yet greater ; that he died without the possibility of repentance ; and I found, on such a death, a prayer that God would complete the number of the elect." (130.)

It is very important to connect the Burial Service (though I fear it never is connected) with the Athanasian Creed ; for since that symbol declares that whosoever does not believe in the prescribed way concerning the Trinity shall WITHOUT DOUBT perish everlastingly — how incumbent it is on every clergyman to ascertain before the funeral service is performed, whether the person to be buried did, during his lifetime, understand and keep whole and undefiled the Athanasian Creed !

Allow me, my dear uncle, to ask of you if you ever ascertain this point when an opportunity occurs ? Did old Gaffer Jones and old Goody Brownrigg believe the consubstantiality and coequality of the three hypostases ? Did they, in fact, " keep whole and undefiled the Catholic faith ?" for if they did not, the Prayer Book tells us they must without doubt perish everlastingly ; and how shocking in

such a case to think that you did at their funerals number them amongst the elect, and in the face of the whole parish declare they were buried in a sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. The rubric of the Burial Service orders that "no persons excommunicate, or unbaptized," shall be buried with Christian burial. Now who are persons excommunicate? Why those who are so pronounced in the Bishop's Court, persons who have not paid the fees to the Proctors, or who have been declared excommunicate by canonical law.

The Canons of the Church of England are very fond of excommunicating people, as for instance, "Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that the Church of England, by law established under the King's Majesty, is not a true and Apostolical Church, teaching and maintaining the doctrine of the Apostles . . . that the form of God's worship in the Church of England established by law, and contained in the Book of Common Prayer, is a corrupt, and superstitious, and unlawful worship of God, or containeth *anything* in it repugnant to the Scriptures—that any of the Thirty-nine Articles are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not, with a good conscience, subscribe unto, let him be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the Archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of such his wicked errors."

Such wicked wretches as these and unbaptized babies cannot be buried "in a sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection;" in fact, they are not in the number of the elect; they are cut off and cast away as abominable branches, whilst all the drunkards and prostitutes, the thieves and the rogues, are buried with better hopes and more splendid privileges.

&c. &c.

LETTER XXVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

BEFORE the clergy of the Establishment are allowed to regale themselves with the provender of tithes, they are well yoked and harnessed with numerous protestations,* abjurations, declarations, and oaths—a heavy weight, indeed, for any but clerical shoulders—and it is this consciousness of these trappings, I presume, which emboldens them to assume the bovine character, by preaching against the “sin of muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn.” Part of this harness is the following declaration openly read before the congregation, after the Morning and Evening Service, on some Lord’s day within two months after the possession of a benefice: “I, *A. B.*, do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, and *other rites and cere-*

* A Vicar makes at least twelve solemn attestations before he is duly settled in his vicarage; should he have been previously licensed to a curacy, he will, in the whole, have made sixteen declarations. A Bishop, gradually raised to the bench through minor degrees, will be found to have taken at least thirty oaths.

monies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England, together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, *pointed as they are to be sung or said in the Churches*, and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.’

There is something quite droll in the tyranny of this attestation; for, besides “the unfeigned assent and consent,”—a terrible two-edged sword that must wound every clergyman’s conscience *somewhere*, if he has any conscience at all,—it is, as it were, putting a fool’s cap on the victim by making him swear to accept the Psalms “as they are pointed in the Prayer Book to be S^{UNG} or said.” The object of this ridiculous oath is, I believe, to secure two points—first, singing of Psalms in cathedral fashion, and secondly, an approbation of the vicious translation of the Psalms found in the Prayer Book.

Now, on turning to these Psalms, as they are “pointed to be sung or said” in the Prayer Book, I find two black spots in the middle of every versc; these are singing points, or *gabbling stops*, if I may so term them, to check the chaunters when they are gabbling full drive, and to make them wind up in that place with a cadence. Thus, Psalm xxxii., “*Bcati quorum*,” verse 10, “Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding: whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle, lest they fall upon thee.” At the ominous

words "no understanding," the chanters are to make a cadence, and having done that, to gabble on to the words "upon thee," when another cadence takes place, and so on through every Psalm; and so important is this arrangement in the eyes of the Church of England, that it is made matter of solemn engagement to every beneficed clergyman within the kingdom.

This engagement, moreover, secures the approbation and use of the Prayer-Book Psalter, and prevents the poor clergyman and his parish from turning to the word of God for the Psalms. Thus, the vicious translation of the Prayer Book is tied like a mill-stone round the neck of the Church of England, and thus are its worshippers compelled to make use of that which is not Scripture, but Scripture garbled. The Psalms in the Prayer Book were printed as they were first translated from the Vulgate in the reign of Henry VIII.; and as it was supposed that the people had become accustomed to them, the Bishops declined inserting the corrected translation of our authorised Bible published in the reign of James I. Hence, the Prayer-Book version of the Psalms is doubly vicious, for not only is it taken from the Vulgate and Septuagint, and not from the Hebrew, but the Vulgate translation is itself not by the hand of Jerome; for when he translated the Scriptures, he did not think it safe to change the old popular version of the Psalms already in use, and therefore left this part of the Scriptures as he found it.

It ought, however, to be declared by the Bishops, plainly, and without circumlocution, whether or no the Psalms in the Bible version are spurious; if they are spurious, then farewell the authorised Bible! if they are not spurious, then the version in the Prayer Book must be spurious: it is impossible that two translations of one book, greatly differing from one another, can each be correct—let the Bishops make up their minds and decide accordingly.

Amongst the multitude of errors in the Psalms, printed in the Prayer Book, I shall here notice only two. We read the first verse of the twenty-ninth Psalm in the Bible thus:—“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.” But the Prayer Book favours us with this extraordinary version:—“Bring unto the Lord, O ye mighty, bring *young rams* unto the Lord: ascribe unto the Lord worship and strength:” a very wide variation, indeed, and as far as possible from Scripture. Again in Psalm cv. 28, we find the Bible and Prayer Book giving precisely opposite accounts of a matter of fact. Bible: “And they rebelled not against his word.” Prayer Book: “And they were not obedient unto his word?” Which of these must I believe? But what becomes of the Church of England if I cannot trust the Prayer Book?

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I HAVE thus, my dear uncle, given you a slight sketch of some imperfections in the Prayer Book, and though for brevity's sake it is but a sketch, and though I have omitted many things, yet you will perceive the difficulties which press on my mind in the question of conformity with the Established Church. Believe me, however, I do not confine my objections merely to the Prayer Book and Ceremonies, for I see in the workings of the Church of England enormous corruptions and gigantic evils—an absence of what one would wish, and, in lieu thereof, the presence of much which is pernicious and scandalous.

I will say nothing here of the union of Church and State; for, though I believe such a union must ever be sinful and produce sin, my business at present is with facts, and not with abstract principles. Wealth and power have done their usual mischief in the Established Church, and, if that be true which we read in Scripture, that “the love of money is the root of all evil,” what an incalculable degree of evil must there be in the opulent and avaricious Establishment! The great

body of the Bishops ever have been, and ever must be, men of worldly habits and inclinations ; either given to avarice, or living a life of political intrigue, or magnificent luxury. Of course, in every generation there always have been exceptions, and some good men have always been amongst them, but I speak of the constant *majority*, and I cannot help coming to the conclusion, that the Episcopal bench has been, and ever will be, till the Church shall be separated from the State, *corrupt*.

To begin with the beginning of the Church of England, in those days when manners were more simple, and the tone of morals amongst Churchmen more austere than at present ; yet, even then, the Prelates indulged in the exhibition of secular grandeur and worldly state ill becoming their situation. They had had, indeed, their *gossips*^{*}, who for them had renounced “the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,” but it produced no effect in their conduct ; for, in the reign of Elizabeth, they drew the attention of Beza, who himself saw their proceedings, and has left his testimony against the Church of England and its great Prelates. He notices with disapprobation the pomp of the Church worship, the sound of the organs without any meaning, the voluntaries, the gay and quirk-ing music of the cathedrals, and adds, “Moreover, the Primate, the Bishops, and other such officers

* Godfathers and godmothers in baptism.

of the Church, are accompanied by pages, lacqueys, estaffiers, and other followers, up to twenty, thirty, forty, or a hundred, nay, even two hundred horses;" and then he complains generally of the debauchery and vanity of the court, the luxury of the Prelates, and the pride of the nobles.

Again we hear from another witness similar testimony:—"Archbishop Whitgift's train sometimes consisted of one thousand horse. The Archbishop being once at Dover attended by five hundred horse, one hundred of which were his servants, many of them wearing chains of gold, a person of distinction then arriving from Rome greatly wondered to see an English Archbishop with so splendid a retinue; but seeing him the following Sabbath in the Cathedral of Canterbury attended by the above magnificent train, with the Dean, Prebendaries, and preachers in their surplices and scarlet hoods, and hearing the music of organs, cornets, and sacbuts, he was seized with admiration, and said that the people of Rome were led in blindness, being made to believe that in England there were neither Archbishop, Bishop, nor Cathedral, nor any ecclesiastical government, but that all were pulled down. But he protested that, unless it were in the Pope's chapel, he had never seen a more solemn sight, nor heard a more solemn sound." (Paule's Life of Whitgift.)

Thus gorgeous and glittering was the Church of England in times when hundreds of pious

servants of Christ were dying in jails for declining to wear the surplice—for refusing to put on a Popish habiliment, which even the Bishops confessed was a matter of indifference!

I could in every generation, by referring to biography, bring forward similar testimony of the wealth, grandeur, and vanity of the Protestant Prelates. But, besides the effects of powers and riches, there has always been another canker worm eating into the vitals of the Church—*political influence*. Bishop Newton, in the memoir of his own life, tells us that George II. had encouraged Dr. Thomas to expect preferment from the crown, and to consult with the secretary then attending on the King, who would inform him of his wishes, and that the next time he saw the Doctor, he said—“My Lord Harrington informs me that you desire to have one of the royal prebends, but it is not in my power to get you any such thing; my ministers lay their hands upon them all *as necessary for my service*.” From the same life of Newton it appears that when Green, an old intimate friend of Newton, was made Bishop of Lincoln, “Newton reminded him of a common friend of theirs, Mr. Seward of Lichfield, whom he knew that the other was well disposed to serve, and hoped that he would collate him to a prebend in his Church of Lincoln. The Bishop replied that he should always bear him in memory, and if ever an opportunity offered he would certainly give him

a prebend ; but at present he stood engaged *eleven deep* to the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Hardwicke, and their friends." I will not waste time by commenting on these anecdotes,—they speak for themselves without any assistance from me ; but, alas ! they are only specimens of what always is going on in the Establishment, and ever must it be so till the Church is separated from the State ; for it is a moral certainty that Prelates who are elevated by the influence of the great nobles must give away their preferment to suit the wishes of their patrons ; so that in fact Episcopacy is a perennial fountain of bitter waters to the nation, the source of a corrupt priesthood, the origin of a great spiritual evil.

Dr. King, master of a college at Oxford, who died in 1763, has spoken out plainly concerning what he saw and knew in his generation :—" To speak freely, I know nothing that has brought so great a reproach on the Church of England as the avarice and ambition of the Bishops. Chandler, Bishop of Durham ; Willis, Bishop of Winchester ; Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury ; Gibson, and Sherlock, all died shamefully rich, some of them worth more than one hundred thousand pounds. I must add to these my old antagonist Gilbert, predecessor to Drummond, the present Archbishop of York : some of these Prelates were esteemed great Divines, *but they could not be called good Christians*. The great wealth which they had

heaped up, the fruits of their bishoprics, and which they left to enrich their families, was not their own; it was due to God, to the Church, to their poor brethren.”

All this may be said of this generation in which we are now living. Look, for instance, to Bishop Tomline and other Prelates who have died within our memories enormously rich; see the account of the Bishop of Limerick,* who died in 1826 with vast possessions, though he began life as the son of a strolling beggar; and take a glance at the Bishops now wearing the mitre, to ascertain how they dispose of their preferment, and what they are doing with their wealth. What did the Bishop of Durham do with his seventy thousand pounds fine for the renewal of the lease of Mrs. Beaumont's lead mines? What has the Archbishop of York done with thirty-five thousand pounds which he received no long time ago? They will tell us it has all been laid out in heavenly purposes, which I care not to question; or they will say that Prelates ought to be rich gentlemen, and to keep up their station in a lordly way, which would be quite true if Jesus Christ of the seed of David had not been crucified at Jerusalem, and if that Gospel had not been preached by which men shall some day all be judged.

A foreign nobleman, Prince Muskau Pucklin,

* Beverley's Letter to the Archbishop of York, p. 14. Eighteenth edition.

has lately visited England, and has published his observations on what he saw in ecclesiastical as well as in civil matters. The impression left on his mind evidently is that the Church of England is an establishment of vast wealth, and that its ministers are men of pleasure; for he, moving amongst the aristocracy, saw only Bishops, Deans, and Prebendaries, and opulent pluralists. He tells us of the fine things he saw at Bishopsthorpe in Yorkshire; he talks of the Archbishop's superb hot-houses and green-houses, and all the luxuries of that Prelate's palace; he comments on the wig and apron, the costume and the drapery, the ceremonies and the equipage: in short, he talks of the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, but of the cross of Christ he says nothing, for he saw none of its effects at Bishopsthorpe, and therefore he has not recorded that which he did not see.

From Bishopsthorpe let us pass on to Lambeth, and there we shall behold a grander palace, and a more glittering show. The whole of that stately edifice has lately been refurbished and made complete at a great cost; but I must leave a description of its apartments, corridors, galleries, banqueting halls, and library to architects and upholsterers; and the sumptuous feasts which are placed on the metropolitan tables on public days let the clergy describe who are invited to those high solemnities: for it ill becomes me with a

Non-conforming stomach to attempt the lofty theme.

The Irish Primate Beresford is not behind the English metropolitans in state and expenditure; his table and all the et-cetera of his episcopal magnificence are quoted as an example of what a noble Prelate ought to do: for wherever we turn amongst the Bishops we hear chiefly of their grandeur, their luxuries, and their palaces; all is imposing on the senses, all is laid out for the best advantage to secure the reverence of sinful man, who in his fallen state pays respect to these things. It is not in vain that we see Bishops riding in purple coaches in St. James's Park, with two stalwart footmen standing behind, dressed in violet-tinted habiliments, and carrying two huge canes;—it is not in vain that “my lord” is driven by a fat purple coachman, with a cocked hat and a flaxen wig;—it is not in vain that a gold mitre is blazing on the panels of the coach, and on the hammer-cloth;—it is not in vain that “his grace” or “my lord” carries some yards of muslin for his sleeves, for all these things help to rule men by deception, as turkeys are ruled by a long pole and a bit of red rag.

From the pride and luxury of the higher clergy I pass on to say a word respecting their titles against which our Lord has left us an express prohibition, which not only is conclusive on the sub-

ject, but destroys the whole system of prelacy. "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Now, after this prohibition, to give a Bishop the swelling title of "Right Reverend Father in God," is doing the very thing which we are expressly commanded not to do; and, as if we wished to show our studied contempt of Christ, we have selected the identical titles which he forbade us to use!

History, however, records one instance of an Archbishop whose eyes were opened to see these things, which indeed are so plain that it is wonderful how any person can help seeing them. Burnet says of the excellent Archbishop Leighton, "he hated all the appearances of vanity; he would not have the title of 'Lord' given him by his friends, and was not easy when others forced it on him. He went round his diocese every year preaching and catechising from parish to parish, and gave all his income, save the small expense of his own person, to the poor."

Having thus brought forward my objections to the visible state of the Church of England, and more particularly amongst its dignitaries, I cannot find a better conclusion to this letter than in the words of the great Milton:—"There be those in

the world, and I among those, who nothing admire the idol of a bishopric, and hold that it wants so much to be a blessing, as that I deem it the merest, the falsest, the most unfortunate gift of fortune; and were the punishment and misery of being a Bishop to be terminated only in the person, and did not extend to the affliction of the whole diocese, if I could wish anything in the bitterness of my soul to an enemy, I should wish him the biggest and fattest bishopric."

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE highest dignitaries in the Church Establishment, namely, the Archbishops, must share in the same commendation with the minor officials; that their offices are not of Apostolical institution, and were utterly unknown in the first century.

This is so generally conceded, that hardly any clergyman, however furious his prejudices, could now be found to deny it: nothing but a spirit of desperate lying could tempt any churchman to say that the offices of Archbishop, Archdeacon, Dean, Prebend, Canon, Chancellor, Subdean, Vicar Choral, Grand Vicar, Rural Dean, Residentiary, Rector, Vicar, or Curate, were instituted in the Apostolical age.

Many contend that the three orders, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, are Apostolical and Scriptural; but no one is hardy enough to put in the same plea for the above-named ecclesiastical offices. Now this consideration alone ought to make a churchman ponder deeply on the strange state of that church to which he belongs, and which is thus, from the highest offices down to the

lowest, ruled by a set of men whose titles and prerogatives are of a spurious and superstitious origin.

The title "Metropolitan," that title which helps to swell out the high-sounding additions of our Archbishops, does not occur till mentioned by the Council of Nice. The Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, conferred the honour of the metropolitan dignity on its Bishop; and from that time the Bishop of Chalcedon styled himself Archbishop of Bithynia. The Church in those days was mainly occupied in increasing the power of the Clergy; and, therefore, gladly embraced this new "Dukedom" of the clerical aristocracy: the title of Archbishop became a general favourite, and was admitted in various parts of the world where the bastard Christianity of that age prevailed. In Ireland there are four Archbishops, in France a much larger number, and so in other parts of Christendom. And yet it is to an Archbishop, "to the Metropolitan See," that all our Bishops swear obedience.

As for the foolish office of Archdeacon, it also sprung up in those dark times; but he that held it was *chosen by the Deacons*: so says Jerome. "Diaconi elegant de se, quem industrium noverint, et Archidiaconum vocent."

The Popish Council of Trent, which showed a particular liking for any institution not to be

found in Scripture, called the Archdeacon *the eye of the Bishop*.

There was another officer called Arch-Presbyter, considered one step below the Archdeacon ; and this office was by election of the Presbyters. The Church of England has let slip this precious gem, as indeed it has another office, which might have been highly serviceable by judicious management in these days of opposition and dissent, —I mean the Archdeaconess ; concerning whose duties much is said in Church History, and in the decrees of Councils.

The laws of Theodosius order that the lady who holds this office shall be sixty years old ; but Justinian and the Council of Chalcedon, with greater gallantry, open the door for the ladies when they are forty years old. The Archdeaconess was regularly and canonically ordained with imposition of hands, unction, robes, holy water, and probably a holy kiss : for this we read in history, that Nectarius, Archbishop of Constantinople, ordained a young widow before she had attained the canonical age, to the great scandal of the orthodox, who boldly declared that there was a flirtation between the Archbishop and Archdeaconess !

The Council of Orange, A.D. 441, with marked incivility to the ladies, passed a decree against the office altogether, which was gradually discontinued in the Western Churches ; but the Greek

Church clung to it a long time after. Now it may be observed that this office is unquestionably of prior date to that of an Archbishop; for Tertulian mentions it, and many of the Fathers before the fifth century; so that I cannot see by what right the Church of England has extinguished the Archdeaconess, but only snuffed the Archbishop.

But let us suppose, my dear uncle, that the office were now in being, and that the consecration of the Archdeaconess were in the Prayer Book, and that the Crown had the disposal of this Ecclesiastical honour; can we doubt that the Clergy, one and all, Evangelical and non-Evangelical, would hesitate to swear "their unfeigned assent and consent to it"? Can we doubt of its being greatly admired and praised as a glorious distinction of our excellent "Church as by law established"? And would not the whole clerical body, from the Bishop of London down to my uncle Lucifer, preach and teach in its defence?—yes; I ask, would not the immortal L. S. E. declare that it was Scriptural—that it was a part of the eternal Church—that it was in the Wilderness forty years—and that Miriam the prophetess was unquestionably an Archdeaconess? And would not all the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons loudly echo "Amen"?

Then consider again the advantage to Church and State if the Prayer Book would restore this delightful dignity! Think of the great help it would be to the Peeresses, and all the high-born

dames, who now turn their thoughts to the pension list! Think of Mrs. Arbutnot, the Duchess of Northumberland, or Lady Beresford, set off with the Archidiaconal hat and cap! — Surely this “primitive institution” ought to be restored to us; and then, if it be true, according to the decree of the Council of Trent, that an Archdeacon is “the eye of the Bishop,” how much more pleasant would it be for the Archbishop of York to ogle his diocese with these fair dames, than with his present Archdeacons, who, compared with the ladies, can rank no higher than green spectacles.

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXIX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

THE letters you have lately received from me must have prepared you to expect the catastrophe. It must have been manifest to you that in every essential point I am a Non-conformist; and that I consider the Church of England a legacy of Popery; an institution of sinful men; and very far distant indeed from what the Church of Christ should be.

You will remember that in one of my letters I gave you some information of a small society of under-graduates in this University, who meet together for mutual edification and social prayer. These meetings, I said, varied from about a dozen in number to nearly thirty. All the members of this society entertain views more or less tending to Non-conformity. We had meetings this term to consider the question of Conformity with the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. We discussed the various points separately; and most of our decisions were such as professed Dis-

senters would have acquiesced in. The topics for our consideration were,—1. Diocesan Episcopacy. 2. The three orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. 3. The union of Church and State. 4. A secular head of the Church of Christ. 5. A Liturgy in the abstract. 6. The Liturgy of the Church of England. 7. The institution of Deans, Chapters, and all the titular Priests of the Church. 8. The parish form of the Church of Christ. 9. Parliamentary Prelates. 10. Communion with a corrupt Church. 11. Rites and ceremonies, and pontifical habits in the worship of God. 12. The worship exacted in the University of Cambridge. 13. Subscription of articles, oaths, abjurations, and declarations.

The subject of our last discussion but one, namely, “the worship exacted in the University,” put our principles to the test; and as the consequences of this debate were anticipated, only thirteen attended. In the previous debates we never had numbered fewer than twenty. It was agreed by a majority of eleven to two, “that conformity with the worship exacted in the colleges was sinful, and that it is an act of adhesion to the Church of Rome to wear the surplice.”

We met the next evening to consider in what respect we should act upon our decision. Only nine attended, but we agreed unanimously to decline wearing the surplice; to refuse taking part

in declamations* ; and to refuse the Lord's Supper, as administered in the college. We saw very clearly that our trial must first be on the question of the surplice ; because we have to wear it here twice a week at least, and sometimes oftener ; so that it was requisite to prepare ourselves for the struggle very soon. We had only five days before us, in which time the question must be decided ; and we agreed that it was not only the line of duty, but of wisdom, to meet the difficulty without any further delay. As it was a very serious matter to every one of us, we met twice every day, to consider how we should act with the most prudence ; and various were the plans proposed and rejected. In these meetings we endeavoured to anticipate every argument which could be brought against us, either by our friends or our enemies. We appointed one of our party to take the opponents' side, and to urge everything possible against our views. In this way we not only were fortified with arguments, but in some sort got over the alarm of discussing these matters with our superiors. I should tell you, however, that before the day of trial came, two of our party withdrew from us : they pleaded " the anger of their parents ; and though they professed to agree with our views entirely, yet they said they could not see their way clear before them in

* Disputations on subjects of profane history, in Latin or in English, which take place in the middle of the evening service in the Chapels of the Colleges.

offending their parents on a point of this sort ;— if it had been a question of denying the faith, they would gladly have gone to the stake,” &c. &c. &c.

We afterwards discovered that one of the seceders was an orphan : that the other had only a father living ; and that he had been for five years shut up in a lunatic asylum.

A deputation of three first waited on the senior Dean, in whose department is the control of the chapel affairs. John Calvin Thompson (son of your predecessor) was the spokesman ; I need not tell you what he said, but, in my opinion, he spoke very well, with proper respect, and yet with sufficient firmness. The Dean was sitting over a bottle of claret with one of the Fellows ; they heard our story to the end without saying a word, but when John Calvin had finished speaking, they stared at one another and seemed quite amazed. “ Pray, Sir,” said the Dean, “ how many of you are there that have come to this strange resolution ? ” “ Seven, Sir ; but many more agree with us in our views of this subject, though they decline taking part in our proceedings. ” “ Seven ! seven ! ” said the Dean, apparently deeply musing, “ I cannot suppose that seven men would all go mad together on one point—that is impossible ; I must, therefore, suppose that the Puritanical fever is once more reviving in Cambridge, after a repose of a century and a half. ” We stood silent, waiting for an answer to our petition. The Dean seemed

so perplexed, that his friend stepped in to the controversy to his assistance, but, as he is a gentleman of very choleric temperament, he had hardly spoken three sentences without falling into a most furious passion. Much and vehemently did he abuse us ; we were “canting roundheads,” “shrivelled up with sin,” “sneaking Puritans,” and I know not what besides. Having gone on in this strain for about five minutes, not without an occasional oath, the Dean stopped him, and brought the interview to a close,—“Gentlemen, you know the discipline of the college ; the statutes require you both to wear the surplice and to take part in the declamations in chapel, and to communicate on the stated days : there is no instance of any relaxation in this discipline, in the two first points at least, though perhaps we are now less strict in the third than the statute enjoins : I can, therefore, do nothing for you ; I have no power to give you a dispensation, you *must* conform or take the consequences.” We then quitted the Dean’s chambers, having first left with him a written protestation, signed with all our names, and in this protestation we had briefly inserted our arguments for non-conformity with the college worship. From the Dean’s chambers we went to the Master’s lodge ; he was at dinner with the Heads of the Houses, whom he was that day entertaining with a sumptuous feast in honour of one of the Prayer-Book Saints (St. George, the Arian Bishop of

Alexandria, as well as I remember): it was a very great day with these dignitaries, and it was no easy matter to procure an interview even with the Butler; having stood in the hall a full quarter of an hour, at last the great gentleman came: we put our document into his hands, begged him to deliver it to the Master, and retired.

We agreed to keep away from a surplice-worship till Sunday; but on Sunday morning, having first met together in my rooms to join in social prayer, we all went to chapel in a body together, and marched into the choir without our surplices, in spite of the chapel-clerk, who stood at the entrance of the choir with his wand, and in vain cried out, "Gentlemen! your surplices! Gentlemen! this is a surplice-morning!" Not a word did we say in reply, but walked up the aisle and took our seats at the upper end. The chapel-clerk followed us, and singling me out, he said with great vehemence, "Mr. Emerson, you must put on your surplice; you cannot sit here without your surplice." I replied, "Don't trouble yourself, I do not intend to put it on, or to go from my seat till the service is over." The chapel-clerk said that I must, and long did he stand expostulating and arguing the point with me as a matter of necessity; but as I answered nothing, he then went to John Calvin, but could make no impression there. This scene of course drew the attention of the whole chapel, every one was staring at

us ; those who were at the lower end, and could not see us where they stood, got upon the benches—there was a general commotion—and the Dean and tutors put their heads together to take wise counsel in such an emergency. After numerous messages from the Dean to our party, the Dean himself at last descended into the arena from his stall, and walking up to John Calvin bade him go out of the chapel immediately. Calvin refused, and so did we all. The Dean at last returned to his seat, chafing, and his wrath was not a little increased by the very audible laugh amongst the white-robed multitude of under-graduates.

When service was at last over we walked out with the rest, though not without many an idle question from our acquaintances, who were anxious to understand that which to them was a mystery. The under-graduates formed in groups on the grass plot, and had they understood our motives, I have no doubt we should have been most roughly handled by them ; for there is just now amongst these poor misguided* creatures a rancorous hatred against what they call “the Puritans.” For the present, they thought it was a mere prank of disobedience, and were rather amused at it : had they known that our conscience was concerned in this day’s

* Alluding, also, to the animosity exhibited against the Dissenters at the installation of the Duke of Wellington in the office of Chancellor in the University of Oxford. The under-graduates on that occasion gave a “godly groan against the Puritans” in the theatre.—ED.

trial—and a very severe trial it was—there is no saying to what extremities they would not have proceeded. But all passed off very quietly. About an hour afterwards the Master sent us a positive order to stay away from chapel in the evening, and to attend a meeting of the Seniority the next forenoon at eleven o'clock. We obeyed both orders, and next day at the hour appointed went to the Master's lodge.

The Master and the eight Seniors were all seated in the Council Chamber in their caps and gowns; and it was easy to see by their countenances that they felt little disposed to take a favourable view of Non-conformity that day. The senior Dean, tutors, and chapel-clerk made their complaint, and, when the accusation was ended, the Master said, "Gentlemen, what have you to say for yourselves?"

J. C. Thompson.—"Our reasons, Master, for declining to wear the surplice in the worship of God have already been stated in a paper which we left at the lodge on St. George's day; but we have no objections to repeat our reasons here or elsewhere. We decline wearing the surplice because it is a Popish habit, called in the Roman Catholic ritual 'superpelliceum'—because, according to the vicious system of the Church of Rome, it pretends, by an outward type, to set forth a grace of God, the righteousness of the Saints—because we are not authorized in the New Testament to wor-

ship in Gospel light with symbols and types—because our Lord never instituted habits of ceremony for his people, nor desired them to dress in a prescribed fashion when they said their prayers—because it is certain that the Apostles, and the Churches mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, did not wear surplices—because the wearing of ceremonious garments in prayer is giving up the great principle on which the Reformation is based, namely, the yielding or not yielding to the inventions and traditions of men—because, if this be allowed, all the trumpery of Popish superstitions may be lawful also, such as lawn sleeves, rochets, hoods, square caps, pluvials, dalmaticas, chasibules, maniples, and other gear of that sort—and, finally, because we read in the Scriptures that God is a Spirit, and all they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, not in beggarly elements of types and visible representations.”

Master.—“Don’t you know that every student in the University must conform to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England?”

J. C. Thompson.—“We are not commanded by the Prayer Book to wear surplices, the order is only to be found in the Canons, which are not law even with ecclesiastics: if the Canons were pressed on the clergy as you press them upon us, then would the Master and Seniors, and every Priest, be obliged to wear a skull-cap all day long, to ride

out in a cassock, and to do many strange things, as ridiculous as they would be superstitious. But it matters not to us what the Prayer Book, Canons, or College statutes command; our rule of conduct is in the Bible and in the Bible only."

Master.—“Why, then, did you come to Cambridge, if you had made up your minds to resist the established order of things?”

J. C. Thompson.—“I can only answer for myself. I came to the University in a state of indifference on these subjects; my opinions have been formed since I have been here, for I cannot say I had any opinions at all on the points in dispute when I matriculated.”

Master.—“How can you reconcile it to your consciences to make this stir about a matter so indifferent as the wearing of a surplice? What harm can it do you? Is any under-graduate the worse for conforming to this long-established and harmless custom?”

J. C. Thompson.—“Nothing can be indifferent that relates to the worship of God and the Gospel. If the doctrine of yielding to matters ‘indifferent’ be once allowed, then by the same argument the Master of this college might put on cloth of gold and elevate the host; for what does it signify whether the bread be handed around or first lifted up by a Priest? Is the bread any worse for undergoing such a lifting? or will it do us any harm to communicate under such a ceremony? Why not

conform in such trifles, and thus show our charity to the Papists? And in the same way every superstition may be introduced, for the spirit of indifference in the worship of God is the spirit of libertinism, the spirit which animates an atheist as well as a Pope. The atheist will *yield* all trifles of this sort to the Pope, who *insists* on them. He that cares not what is done in religion, but will do anything for the sake of peace, is a right-hand man of the Devil, an instrument of superstition; and superstition is nothing but an epitome of hell itself.

“ We therefore consider it sinful to conform to any heathen or Popish custom, however harmless it may appear, for we are fully convinced that all corruptions of religion have come into the world by bad men indulging their fancies in matters of religion, and by better men giving way to them as to trifles against which it was not worth while combating. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, made Israel to sin by such arguments as are used for our conformity to things ‘indifferent.’ He did but alter a few particulars, as, for instance, the place; he said they should worship in Dan and Bethel instead of Jerusalem, and what rational man could see the difference, since one place is as good as another to worship in?—Then, he did but change the signs of the Divine Presence, golden calves instead of golden cherubim, and the calves were more intelligible than the mysterious figures

of the cherubim, which no man could well comprehend. And then, for the time of his festivals, he fixed the fifteenth day of the eighth month instead of the seventh; and what did it matter? One day was as good as another; it was a matter of perfect indifference, and people ought to obey their superiors in things indifferent. By arguments like these the Church of England upholds the surplice, and other inheritances of the man of sin."

Master.—“It is impossible to prove from Scripture that wearing the surplice is unlawful. Show me that it is forbidden in the Bible, and I will then yield to your most unreasonable scruples; but when it is most certain that you have no authority of Scripture on your side, then it is evident that your duty is to obey your superiors, and to submit to their commands when they do not command unlawful things. Bishop Stillingfleet's words I consider unanswerable: ‘All things are lawful which are *not forbidden*, and upon *this single point* stands the whole controversy of separation, as to the constitution of our Church.’”

J. C. Thompson.—“If the Master will allow me to refer to Bishop Stillingfleet, I will answer him by his own words—(Here the servant was ordered to bring Stillingfleet's works.)—Thus says the Bishop in writing against the Papists:—‘But we, knowing them (*i. e.* Papists) so experimentally, are not to be compassed by needless symbolizing

with them in anything, for I conceive our best policy is studiously to imitate them in nothing, but for all indifferent things to think the worse of them for using them. As no person of honour would willingly go in the known garb of any lewd and infamous person, whatsoever we court them in, they do but turn it to our scorn and contempt, and are more hardened in their wickedness; wherefore seeing that needless symbolizing with them does them no good, but hurt, we should account ourselves in all things indifferent, perfectly free to satisfy and please, in the most universal manner we can, those of our own party, not caring what opinions, or customs, or outward formalities the Romanists or others have, or may have had, from the first degeneracy of the Church, which we ought rather to account the more hideously soiled by the Romanists using them; but, supporting ourselves upon plain Scripture and solid reason, to use and profess such things as will be most agreeable to us all, and make most for the welfare and safety of the kingdom of Christ.' (Dial. III.) Now these are exactly our sentiments, and therefore we leave Bishop Stillingfleet to confute Bishop Stillingfleet.

“ I would, however, ask the Master how the surplice can be considered a thing indifferent, when it is made by the Church of England an absolute requisite for an officiating Priest, and when it is forced upon us against our consei-

ences? Would it not be a great act of tyranny if the King were to compel the Master of this college to wear a fool's cap; and would the tyranny be alleviated if the Master were reminded that the wearing of a fool's cap is indifferent, that it is not forbidden in Scripture—that whatever is not forbidden is lawful, and that it is a sin to disobey our superiors in things indifferent?

“But if the surplice is a thing indifferent, how comes it that the worship of God cannot go on without this dress? And how is it to be accounted for, that though a most godly minister would be driven out of the Church if he attempted to engage in prayer without this white robe, yet a notorious Socinian, a deist, a drunkard, an adulterer, might officiate undisturbed to the day of judgment?”

Master.—“The custom of the Church hath been all along to have a grave and sober ritual. The Established Church has purged away the dross of the Romanists, and has retained only that which is for edification. The Apostle says, *let all things be done decently and in order.*”

J. C. Thompson.—“Custom is a rule of faith unknown in the Gospel; we do not follow ‘a vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers,’ but we follow this truth: what is the truth? it is Christ; it is taking up our cross, and following him in all things. He is King, Priest, and Prophet, and in all these his offices we must look up to him in hearty obedience and sincere faith; but

as for these weak and beggarly elements of white linen and all other Popish types, they are nothing but the lumber of voluntary humility, and we cannot in our consciences find anything like an argument for conformity with such idle traditions. 'Custom' is the Trojan horse of the Church; within the belly of this capacious monster, *Custom*, were hid Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, Archbishops and Cardinals, Deans and Popes, canons and decretals, acts of supremacy and lawn sleeves, prayer books and surplices, tithes and monks' cowls, doctors' degrees and oaths of abjuration, with all the other treasures of a state Church, too long to mention. Custom has spread midnight over all the earth, but of this source of mischief Tertullian hath well spoken:— '*Consuetudo ab aliquâ ignorantia vel simplicitate initium sortita in usum per successionem corroboratur, et ita adversus veritatem vindicatur; sed Dominus noster Jesus Christus veritatem se non consuetudinem cognominavit. Hæreses non tam novitas quam veritas revincit; quodcumque adversus veritatem sapit, erit hæresis, etiam vetus consuetudo.*'* As for the custom of the surplice, I would remind the Master that the Protestant Salmasius and his

* "Custom, taking its origin from some ignorance or foolishness, becomes strengthened into a fixed law by traditional use, and thus is set up against the truth; but our Lord Jesus Christ said he was *the truth*, he did not say he was *custom*. Heresy is not so much convicted by its novelty as by the truth; whatever is against the truth will be heresy, although it should be a very ancient custom."

learned opponent Petavius both agree that, at first, the Christian proselytes wore no distinctive dress in their worship; the surplice was brought into the Church A. D. 796 by Pope Adrian; it was copied from the dress of the mystics of Mithras, from the Persian fire-worshippers, and the Priests of Isis, for the Priests of Isis wore both the tonsure and the surplice; and the monks of Egypt, charmed with this white robe, adopted it, taught it to other Priests, and so spread the edifying 'custom' all over Christendom. With such an origin, and after such a bleaching, who but a superstitious person will deck himself out in this unmeaning robe? And what Church but a corrupt one will make it a matter of importance that her worshippers should submit to this superstition?"

Master.—“ I fear it is hopeless arguing with persons who take such perverse views; but I would ask you if it does not, even to yourselves, appear very wrong thus to create a confusion by appearing in the chapel contrary to the statutes? Why select this eccentric mode of martyrdom? If you are Dissenters, you ought to quit the University without running your heads against a wall of your own rearing. I attribute this act of insubordination entirely to a love of notoriety; the question never till now was moved in the University.”

J. C. Thompson.—“ The Master is mistaken. In the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and of King

James, the surplice was vehemently opposed in Cambridge, and all the scholars of St. John's unanimously refused to wear it, in which determination they were countenanced by some of their superiors*. The power of the Prelates forced them into submission, but not without much difficulty, and many acts of gross oppression. We are aware of the singularity of our conduct, and are prepared to find its effects anything but agreeable; we know that we make ourselves the subjects of much ridicule, and that this affair will probably terminate greatly to our disadvantage. But we trust that, by thus following out a pure principle in early life, we shall be better able to be faithful in all things which the word of God, speaking to our consciences, shall hereafter point out to us. The life of man is a life of trials: it is a narrow and a strait path, and a firm attachment to principle is by no means common in these days. It is better to see one's prospects in life overclouded, and to bear 'the cruel mockings' of ill-natured calumniators, than to cast away principle, which is a strong anchor, and so make shipwreck of faith; it is better to bear affliction with the people of God than to endure the pleasures of sin for a season.

“ The notoriety gained by this contest is far from being so tempting as the Master seems to

* The Masters of Trinity and St. John's Colleges in particular. See their remonstrance in Strye.

think ; but, to bring the matter to a conclusion, we would venture to suggest to this Reverend Seniority that, as it has been conceded to us that the wearing of a surplice is a thing in itself indifferent, we ought therefore to be permitted to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience ; for we are fully determined never again to put on the Popish dress, never again to be present at the profane farce of declamations, and never again to communicate at the college altar.

“ Much is said in these days about the propriety of admitting Dissenters to the University ; here is a case before you, on which, by passing a righteous decree, you might justly get rid of that accusation of bigotry and intolerance under which you now labour. We are Dissenters ; but excepting in the matter of conformity with your mode of worship, what worse is the College for harbouring us ? We confidently appeal to our conduct and characters as being blameless, and the prizes that some of us have gained must sufficiently testify of our diligence in our studies. Neither are we ‘ Atheists,’ according to the opinion of the Chancellor of Oxford, pronounced against Dissenters in the House of Lords. We invite inquiry into our religious practices ; we have social prayer—mutual exposition of the Scriptures — and class meetings—for comforting one another in the faith. We praise God in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,—we attend the sick, and pray

with the dying,—we go to the prisons and give words of instruction to the poor prisoners,—we have a little Sunday School of our own institution ; we lay up of our substance to distribute to the necessities of the poor ; we visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction ; and we keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Therefore our objections to your mode of worship are not founded in any libertine or irreligious views.”

Master.—“ I will do you the justice to say that I believe you are good young men, but you are labouring under a delusion ;—and now let me, as a well-wisher and a friend to your interests in life, beseech you not to be carried away by an overstrained piety. Remember that the Dissenters say nothing about the surplice in these days ; it was a controversy of ferocious times, but a more liberal spirit has now prevailed amongst us, and we seem agreed to forget our differences.”

J. C. Thompson.—“ I am deeply impressed with the kind way in which the Master addresses our little society ; and feel myself fortified against every argument but this friendly and parental tone. But still, Sir, I must not forget that truth, like its master, is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever,—and if our holy and martyred ancestors preferred imprisonment, banishment, and death, sooner than conform with the superstitious remnants of an ill-disguised Popery,—if they have left testimonies in their writings against this sin to which you would now persuade us to submit,

then must we judge that the silence of the Dissenters in these days is to be accounted for by a more worldly spirit of conformity, and by yielding too much to the general fashion of their generation. There are a few Dissenters now amongst the under-graduates, who conform to all the ceremonies ; but this is only proof to us of the laxity of their principles, and of the apathy of their parents and teachers, who have never warned them of the danger of yielding in little points to the principle of evil. We trust that a better spirit will revive amongst Dissenters, and that they will ‘ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein ; that they may find rest to their souls.’ We pity Dissenters who do so conform, and we cannot help looking forward to a day when it will be revealed that such persons have had no religion at all.

“ We beg, however, to assure the Master that our conduct is not contumacious and rebellious: we have had many anxious debates how to act in this business, and we trust we have taken the right course. If any sentence should be pronounced against us, then it will be solemnly recorded that no piety,—no zeal in the prosecution of the appointed studies,—no moral propriety,—no manifestation of talent will avail a Dissenter in the venerable University of Cambridge ;—that whatever is a virtue in a churchman is a vice in a Dissenter ; and unless he will conform to a worship, and to the authority of a Church from which

his conscience revolts, he must share the fate of those who are expelled for flagitious and disreputable conduct. We leave the odium of such a sentence on the Seniority of this celebrated College.”

The conversation now terminated, but I must do justice to the Master by recording his kind and courteous deportment throughout the whole of this interview.

The members of the Seniority said very little; and it was intimated that we must withdraw till the Board had come to a determination.

We were summoned in the evening again to the lodge, though in the interval the tutors had paid us a visit, vainly endeavouring to make us give up the points in question.

At our second appearing before the Board, the Master expressed a wish that we would leave the University quietly, and in case of our acceding to the proposal, he promised that we each should have a “*Bene decessit.*” We declined this favour, and told the Master that, as we were standing forth advocates for the cause of Dissent, we could not give up our case in this manner; and that as the commencement of this controversy was public, so must the termination be public also.

We were then ordered once more to withdraw, and in about an hour afterwards were re-admitted to the Council Chamber.

The Master read our sentence: after detailing

the case in terms to which we did not much object, the decree pronounced upon us was,—“that we were no longer members of the College of the Holy Athanasius in the University of Cambridge.”

I am,

My dear Uncle,

Your affectionate Nephew,

FRANCIS EMERSON.*

* It may perhaps be interesting to the reader to hear something further of this little body of expelled Non-conformists.

Francis Emerson joined the Baptist Church at Cambridge, received adult baptism, and offered himself as a Missionary for the East Indies. After due inquiry, the offer was accepted, and he, with three other Missionaries, sailed for Calcutta from Liverpool.

John Calvin Thompson became a member of an Independent Church at Pentonville, and occasionally exercised himself in preaching in the villages round about London. He was invited to supply a pulpit in a Dissenting Chapel in Kent; and proving very acceptable to the people, was finally invited to take the pastoral charge, by a unanimous call. His congregation is rapidly increasing, and Mrs. Thompson, his mother, has lately become a member of his Church.

The other young gentlemen have all become professed Dissenters, and are variously employed in the trying pilgrimage of human life. The contagion of Non-conformity has not made any open progress in the University of Cambridge. Surplices, and “the wisdom of ancestors,” are the order of the day there still, and are likely to be. Oxford, Cambridge, and Benares are the three most enlightened Universities in the world.—EDITOR.

LETTER XXX.

FROM *the Reverend* RAESHAKH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

DISASTERS are coming upon me as thick as hail : the defection of Frank, and the Dissenting uproar he caused at Cambridge, did indeed greatly distress me ; but on this subject I have written* so much to you, that I shall add no more. If this vexation, however, was great from a nephew, what must a Dissenting blow be from the wife of my bosom ?

About a month since, as I told you, Jane went to pay a visit to her aunt at Leeds ; I not only authorized but encouraged her to go, hoping that a change of scene would raise her spirits. The day before yesterday I received a long letter from her, in which, after a tiresome preface about "conscience," (a word which ought to be erased from all languages,) she comes to this conclusion, that she has made up her mind to join the Baptists, and to be baptized by immersion. Her reasons were such

* Alluding to various letters, not here published, which Rabshakeh had written to his brother on the painful subject of young Emerson's lapse into Non-conformity.—ED.

as have often been urged in our stormy controversies, “the unprofitableness, yea, the positive mischief of my ministry—the pain that she felt on hearing the Dissenters abused and insulted from my pulpit every Sunday—the excited and angry state of the public mind in the parish—the impossibility of her attending the parish church any longer—her predilection for the Dissenting scheme—her conscientious conviction of the errors, superstitions, and corruptions of the Church of England—her great dislike of the loose life of Dr. Birch and some others, my prime friends—the worldly manners of several clergymen who visit at the vicarage—her desire to join a church of poor and humble Christians, whose communion would profit her soul—her thirst after righteousness, which never has received so much as one drop of comfort from any of my sermons—and, finally, her firm persuasion that the baptism of believers is the only baptism mentioned in Scripture.” She told me that she preferred undergoing the rite of immersion far away from home, because it would be less talked of and less known; but she was resolved, when she returned to Tuddington, to attend regularly the Dissenting chapel. To all this was added a very long and very urgent expostulation about my misguided and “mischievous zeal in a false and bad cause,” which, she avers, has turned a peaceable and religious parish into “a nest of hornets.” She entreats me to retrace my steps, and assures me

that, even now, the Dissenters will forgive all I have done, if I will only engage to abstain for the future from all active and offensive warfare. My answer has been very short ; I merely desired her to stay amongst her friends till further orders, “for I could not think of receiving her at home for a long time to come—if *ever* I could bring myself to take a schismatic to my bosom.” Jane’s letter occupied three sheets closely written, so that I only here mention the heads of her *discourse*. You may well suppose how greatly I am distressed by this wretched business, but I forbear to add more at present, for I have to record my public calamities.

The Dissenting chapels have been crowded of late—Mervyn’s chapel particularly so ; for the conspicuous part he has taken in opposing me has made him an especial favourite with the people. His Deacons, (Deacons, forsooth ! not ordained by a Bishop !) finding the chapel far too small, have proposed to enlarge the building, by opening a side recess or aisle, capable, with a gallery, of holding three hundred persons. The plan has met with general approbation ; the building is nearly complete, and is to be opened next Tuesday with sermons for collections to defray the expenses. J—— of Birmingham, and Dr. B——t, are expected to preach on this occasion ; and the people, I understand, are determined to pay off every farthing of the debt before the day closes, “to show the advocates of force what the voluntary

principle *can* do." Where will all these things end? I begin to feel doubts arising in my mind, and am sometimes disposed to give up all further exertions for the Church, to let things take their course, and to leave the victory with these execrable schismatics. But my hopes with the Bishop of L—— buoy me up; if it were not for this consideration, and for the honour of L. S. E., I believe I should retire from the field.

Dr. Birch has been pressing me much to make a diversion in the enemy's camp, by joining common cause with the Wesleyan Methodists. He has said so much on this subject, and has urged me with so much earnestness to follow up the advice of the Bishop of Exeter, that I have at last written a letter of good will to Drance, the Wesleyan superintendent, assuring him that I never meant to include the Methodists in my animadversions on Dissenters—that I consider them allies and friends of the Established Church, and that it is my hearty wish to enter into bonds of closer union with them. I must confess it has gone much against the grain to write this letter, for I never could understand how the Methodists are to be considered better friends of the Establishment now than they were at the first; if they were pelted then, why should they be praised now? if we hunted them down like vermin at first, why should we coax and flatter them now? if Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, wrote a most savage book against these

creatures when they first left the egg-shell, why should Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter, seek in these days to take them under his wing? It seems to me nothing more nor less than an acknowledgment of weakness on our part, and, if they are but half as shrewd as I take them to be, they must perceive it. But Birch says, if we can gain them over to our side, or persuade them to keep a strict neutrality, it does not matter what they may say or think on the business—the wisest maxim with politicians is “divide et impera.” So I have written the letter, and am waiting an answer.

We are to have a meeting next week for a Church-rate. We shall carry it by a small majority, and we cannot get on without it: the roof of the church, and the organ, are sadly out of repair, and many things must be done in various parts of the edifice if we wish the fabric to hold together.

My next will give you a further account of our proceedings.

&c. &c. &c.

LETTER XXXI.

FROM ELISHA DRANCE, *Wesleyan Superintendent*, to the Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE duly received your letter, and, if I have not answered it sooner, you must attribute the delay to the difficulty I have felt in making a proper reply. I had not expected the honour of any communication from the Vicar of Tuddington, by whose published sermon the Wesleyan Methodists are necessarily included in the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram: for, as we have manifestly declined Episcopal jurisdiction; as we have our own form of Church government, and have made such arrangements, that as our people are virtually lost to the Established Church, it is clear we can put in no claim to exception from the ban of excommunication pronounced against Non-conformists by the Vicar of Tuddington and the Letters of L. S. E.

To prevent the continuance of this correspondence, I am anxious, Sir, to make you understand, in the clearest manner possible, that there is not the slightest hope of your bringing back the Wes-

Wesleyan Methodists to the Church of England. We understand our interests too well ever to hearken to such a scheme; and we are fully aware that the proposal originates in the alarm of your Bishops and their adherents, who, finding the Dissenters too strong for them, and taking alarm at the spirit of the age, have, in the hour of danger, bethought themselves of sending down to us for assistance, which we certainly must decline affording them. All that we can promise your party is, that we do not intend, *as a body*, to take any active part in the separation of Church and State; the Conference is determined to keep aloof from that question, and that for various reasons: 1. Our aid is not wanted in accelerating the spirit of the times; the activity of the Dissenters, and the unpopularity of the Clergy, render our exertions unnecessary. 2. We wish before all things to keep in view the interests of Wesleyan Methodism, which is best done by steering clear of all political movements. 3. We expect, in due time, to take that position in the kingdom which the Church of England now occupies, (saving the union of Church and State,) and the prospect of such an event warns us of the impolicy of joining your party. 4. We believe the Church of England to be so much opposed to the popular liberty, and so adverse to all reform, that we fear it may ultimately be destroyed with great violence, in which case, if we were to unite our in-

terests with those of the Establishment, we also might be overthrown in the general confusion.

With these reasons for keeping an apparent neutrality, you must remember that our not openly attacking the Establishment is in reality no gain to your party, for every day brings a large accession to our numbers in these kingdoms, and every individual who joins the Wesleyan Methodists is in fact lost to the Church of England. A Wesleyan does not attend the Church worship—he communicates not at the parish altar—he is not under the guidance or control of the Clergy—he feels no interest in the welfare of the Church—and no sympathy with the alarms of the Bishops.

Our body would not only not be injured by the downfall of the Establishment, but would be materially benefited by such an event; and as the interests of Wesleyan Methodism are the object of my daily care and anxiety, I for one do not conceal my desire to see the reduction of the Established Church.

My advice, Sir, therefore, to your party is, that you should seek to join our body, and to put yourselves under our protection by taking quarterly tickets, and submitting to the discipline of Conference. Our body is in no danger, the Established Church is apparently in great peril. We certainly will not come to you for assistance, though we will not reject even the Bishop of Exeter, if he should

knock at our door and declare that he was "a sseeker" according to the plan of John Wesley.

I subscribe, for your consideration, the authentic and official record of our sentiments on Church government, by which you will at once perceive the wide and impassable gulf there is between the Wesleyan Methodists and the Church of England; and until your Church shall be pleased to renounce all ideas of diocesan Episcopacy, and to give up all the privileges of the Clergy as the authorized and exclusive teachers of an established religion, it must be most hopeless to expect that there can be any cordial union between us.

The following are the decisions of our early conferences:—

Q. "Does a Church, in the New Testament, *always* mean a single congregation?"

A. "We believe it does; we do not recollect any instance to the contrary.

Q. "What instance or ground is there then in the New Testament of a National Church*?"

A. "We know none at all; we apprehend it to be a MERELY POLITICAL institution.

Q. "Are the three orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, described in the New Testament?"

* This question and answer come to a decision flatly contradicting the thirty-fourth article of the Church of England—"Every particular *or national* Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the Church." The article speaks of the "national" Church, and knows no other; Conference denies that there is such a thing as a national Church.

A. " We think there are* ; and believe they generally obtained in the Church of the Apostolic age.

Q. " But are you sure that God designed the same plan should obtain in all Churches, throughout all ages ?

A. " We are not assured of it, because we do not know it is inserted in Holy Writ.

Q. " If the plan were essential to a Christian Church, what must become of all foreign reformed Churches ?

A. " It would follow they are no part of the Church of Christ ; a consequence full of shocking absurdity.

Q. " In what age was the Divine right of Episcopacy first asserted in England ?

A. " About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign ; till then all the Bishops and Clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained.

Q. " Must there not be numberless accidental variations in the government of various Churches ?

* The members of the Conference which passed this decree were chiefly clergymen of the Established Church ; it is, therefore, not to be wondered that they should take this view of the three orders, for all their prejudices lead them to it. The great Wesley himself was educated in the highest notions of Episcopal power, and gave them up very slowly. He did, however, at last, clearly see and confess that they were *prejudices*.

A. "There must in the nature of things; as God variously dispenses his gifts of nature, providence, and grace, both the offices themselves, and the officers in each, ought to be varied from time to time.

Q. "Why is it that there is no determinate plan of Church government appointed in Scripture?"

A. "Without doubt, because the wisdom of God had a regard to that necessary variety.

Q. "Was there any thought of uniformity in the government of all Churches until the time of Constantine?"

A. "It is certain there was not, nor would there have been then, had men consulted the word of God."

This decree of Conference does in fact set aside the whole polity of the Established Church, and puts the Wesleyan Methodists in such a position, that they are condemned beyond remedy by the Letters of L. S. E., and all the lovers of prelatical jurisdiction.

Mr. Wesley himself made this declaration on another occasion:—"I firmly believe that I am a Scriptural *ἐπίσκοπος* as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be A FABLE, which no man ever did or can prove;" and in a letter to Dr. Coke from Bristol, in the year 1784, he said,—

“ Lord King’s account of the primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order* ;” sentiments which L. S. E. and many of the publications of the Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge, the Canons of the Established Church, and the charges of many Bishops, denounce as heretical and impious.

Turn us then which ever way you will, I fear you will find that we are only Dissenters, and that we stand condemned by your Church with a thousand irrevocable condemnations as a nest of schismatics “ left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. † ” The Eleventh Canon of your Church says “ none of the maintainers of conventicles may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful Churches ;” so that I do not see how the Bishops can make overtures to us without running into the sin of heresy, and without slighting the laws of their own Church.

You are pleased to say “ that there are individuals amongst our preachers of the highest order of talent, and who entertain such correct views of the duty of submission to superiors, that your Church would be much strengthened by placing such men in her high stations, and that more unlikely things have happened than that Jabez

* See Watson’s Life of Wesley, pp. 284—286.

† Archdeacon Daubeny’s Sentence upon Methodists, Independents, &c.

Bunting should ultimately be called to take one of the highest dignities of the Established Church."

I would reply to this insinuation or hope, that I believe the leading Methodist preachers are too much attached to their system to be bribed into your Church, and that, knowing how useful they can be as members of Conference, and how useless they must be as Deans or Bishops, they would decline these honours even if they were offered to them.

Jabez Bunting may have his own views, in which I do not wish to inquire or interfere, but I take him to be too wise a man ever to think of a mitre, and that for two reasons. 1. The power, wealth, and dignity of your Prelates are a precarious tenure at present, and therefore a wise man will think *a bird in the hand worth two in the bush*. 2. Jabez Bunting has power enough already in Conference to satisfy a reasonable man; and although he is an aristocrat amongst our people, he would be nobody amongst your aristocracy: it is far pleasanter, I should suppose, to be worshipped and obeyed in Conference than to be sneered at in the House of Lords. But I do not think the day will ever come when they will propose to elevate Dr. Bunting to the bench—at least, if they do, I am sure the bench must be breaking down; in which case nobody would wish to take a seat on it.

Allow me, Sir, to say, in conclusion, that I had

not expected the honour of a letter from you on this or any other subject, for the last letter I wrote to you, in conjunction with the Dissenting ministers of Tuddington, was answered with repulsive haughtiness, scorn, and contumely.

In other matters you must allow me to assure you that I cordially sympathize with the Dissenters of this parish.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

ELISHA DRANCE,

(Wesleyan Superintendent)

LETTER XXXII.

*From the Reverend RABSHAKEH GATHERCOAL
to L. S. E.*

OH, my dear brother! the plot thickens, the tragedy is drawing to a conclusion, and I begin to wish for Medea's chariot to escape from the catastrophe. But to clear the stage first of minor calamities, my letter to the Wesleyan Superintendent has proved a total failure; the fellow declines a coalition, and has written a saucy reply, in which he takes the tone of a superior, pities the fallen state of our Church, and recommends the Bishops to become Methodists, and to take quarterly tickets! One advantage, however, I have got by writing to him—a proof indisputable that this odious sect is as dangerous as our Clergy declared it would be when John Wesley first began tramping about the country. For my part, I believe the Methodists have done more real harm to us than the Independents, for the Methodists are sapping and mining under the bulwarks, whilst the Independents are laying close siege to us above ground. We know how to oppose the one, but we cannot tell where to meet the other. But to pass on to matters of greater moment—we

have had our meeting for the Church rate, and are defeated!!!

Before I went to the meeting I was closeted with Dr. Birch and Mr. Serope. Mr. Serope, who is not so sanguine as the Doctor, had serious apprehensions of the result of this struggle, and begged to know my reasons for calculating on a majority. Churchwarden Stubbs was with us, and laid before us his list of votes, by which he said he was sure of a majority of near thirty. "But," said he, "if we have a majority of one it will be sufficient." When Stubbs left us, Mr. Serope said I was very imprudent to take any calculation from such a sot as Stubbs, who was always drunk, and did not know what he was about. It would have been much better to have had the opinion of lawyer Squeeze. I assured him that I should have applied to Squeeze if he had been at home, but he had gone to Cornwall, to take possession of property left him there by a distant relation; that I did not know his direction, nor when to expect him again; but I had heard him say that the property of the parish was with the Established Church, and that we could outvote the Dissenters. To this Serope replied very significantly—"This opinion was pronounced before you had sold the Quaker's sheep."

There was, however, no time for a change of policy; we had gone too far to recede; I had mustered all the friends of the Church, and we

must go on with the business as well as we could.

When we went into the Church, we found a vast crowd already assembled there, and filling every part of the building. The Dissenting ministers were all seated together, and I could clearly see that we should have a stormy debate.

I took the chair, *ex officio*, and Dr. Birch, who had house property in the town, sat at my elbow. There was no disturbance at the commencement, but rather, I should say, an awful stillness. I began the business, by explaining the actual condition of the church fabric, and the absolute necessity of raising funds to keep it in repair: all the details and estimates I laid before them. I proved the decay of the timbers in the roof, the deficiency of the lead, the want of new spouts, the crazy state of the organ, and the want of a drain to take away the water from the churchyard. We had put the estimates as low as possible, and I took good care to avoid every topic which could give offence.

The Churchwardens then proposed a rate to defray the expenses of repairing the church and organ, and draining the churchyard.

Mervyn, the Independent Minister, then got up and made a long harangue about the voluntary principle and the rights of conscience—such stuff as the schismatics usually talk—and, therefore, I leave you to imagine what he said. His speech, which

was an hour long, was concluded by moving an amendment, "that the meeting adjourn to that day six months." When he had finished, all the people present seemed to rise up together from their seats and join in one long-continued loud huzza. The silence they had kept till then made this burst of applause the more surprising; I was quite startled with it, and could not conceal my astonishment.

Dr. Birch rose to answer Mervyn, but for a long time he could not get a hearing; they cried out, "Down with Cardinal Birch," "Down with Parson Falstaff," and other jeers of that sort. Mervyn at last persuaded them to listen to the arguments of their opponents with patience. The Doctor spoke, as he always does, very well; there was much humour in his speech, which made the people laugh frequently, and, by that means, he was gaining some power over them. At last, however, he got into a scrape, from which he could not extricate himself. He was showing how the clergy, in all times, and in all nations, had been supported by the payment of tithes; he showed that the custom existed even amongst the heathen—that Apollo took tithes of the Siphnians—that the Delians paid tithes, &c.—and that Herodotus, in the Second Book of his History, records "the piety of Rhodopis, the Thracian, who made a great fortune in Egypt as a courtesan. She presented tithes to the Delphic temple, or, as the

father of history says, ‘ she ordered the tenth part of her property to be expended in making a number of silver spits, each large enough to roast an ox :’ they were sent to Delphi, and were in the sanctuary when Herodotus wrote.” This strange story raised such a roar of laughter that the Doctor could not go on. A fellow cried out from the galleries, “ Oh, Doctor ! how thou must be longing to be at those spits !” and, in short, there was no possibility of saying a word afterwards.

We had now a complete uproar ; at last I persuaded them to hear me, and to come to a decision. As many as were for the rate were to hold up their hands. I did not count them ; for they were not worth counting,—perhaps fifty—not more. I then desired those who were against the rate to hold up their hands, — several hundreds were lifted up.

The churchwardens demanded a poll ; but I followed Scrope’s advice, and told them I should not press the matter.

The rate was refused accordingly.

The shout which followed I leave you to imagine : they gave “ Three groans for the Bishops,” “ Three groans for the silver spits,”—“ Three groans for Rathcormac,”—and “ Three cheers for schism.”

I add no more ; and indeed this is enough.

Your miserable

RABSHAKEH.

CONCLUSION.

THE temper of the noble Rabshakeh seems, after this defeat, to have been greatly ruffled. His letters written to his friends subsequent to the refusal of the Church-rates display so unhappy a state of mind, that I forbear publishing them.

Dr. Birch died shortly afterwards of an apoplexy, after eating too hearty a supper of oysters, at the Vicarage. Churchwarden Stubbs was carried off in an attack of the Asiatic cholera.

Mr. Scrope, the Rector of Amberwell, and the leading magistrate of the district, hastily left the country, having taken away* with him the deposits out of the Savings' Bank of Tuddington, whereby many poor families were utterly ruined.

Another clergyman, a great friend and admirer of Rabshakeh, broke his neck a fox-hunting. This accumulation of misfortunes made Rabshakeh very desirous to quit Tuddington, and he wrote many urgent letters to a *great friend*, asking for preferment, but apparently without success.

In the mean time, the quarrel between the

* The Reverend Henry Small, of St. Albans, has lately committed this act of robbery.

Vicar and the parish daily increased ; every demand made by the Vicar was resisted, and he was constantly in litigation with his parishioners. The whole parish at last unanimously refused to pay tithes any more ; the greater part determined to follow the plan of the Quakers, by passive non-resistance, but several swore they would resist the sale of their goods *by force*. The Vicar, on his part, being fortified by Mr. Screw's opinion, determined to secure his rights, whatever the consequence might be. The constables, in seizing the furniture of a poor widow for tithe, were repelled and cruelly beaten ; and when they returned with fresh force, under the command of the magistrates, after a very severe fight, in which a constable was killed, they were all driven back, and compelled to take refuge in the Vicarage. The Vicarage was stormed, and the Vicar, magistrates, and constables driven out of the parish.

The next day the magistrates and the Vicar returned into Tuddington with an imposing display of military force, from the barracks at Leeds, two field-pieces, and a large detachment of yeomanry. The people of Tuddington were not disposed to yield even to superior force ; blood had been shed in the parish, one of their young men had died of the wounds received from the constables' staves, and his death seemed to have excited the whole population to madness. The Dissenting ministers

in vain endeavoured to calm the parish ; the insurgents would listen to no advice, and, at last, became so angry at this interference, that they threatened to hang any man who should advise them to submit to their enemies. In this spirit they made barricades across the streets, and planted a tri-coloured flag on the market-cross. The Riot Act was read, and, after the time appointed by law, the military, not without much difficulty, stormed the barricades, and fired amongst the people. It is said that eleven were killed at the first discharge of the muskets and thirty wounded. The people were driven out of the market-place, but annoyed the soldiers by firing from the house-tops, or hurling heavy weights upon them. Seven dragoons were killed, and nearly a score badly wounded—several horses were killed. At last the superior skill of the military gained the victory, and the majesty of the laws was respected.

Whilst the battle was going on in the market-place, a detachment of the most determined malcontents had gone round by a back lane and surrounded the Vicarage, which was left totally unprotected. The poor Vicar was taken prisoner : the rebels did not agree what to do with him ; some proposed to hang him up on the bacon-hooks in the kitchen ; others, averse to taking life, proposed binding him by an oath to quit the parish, to resign his charge, and never again to come into the

county ; but the more unrelenting party said they could not believe him on his oath.

In the midst of this awful parley, word came that a party of soldiers was at the bottom of the street, marching towards the Vicarage. The rebels gagged the Vicar, and dragged him out of the Vicarage by the back door ; they hurried him along the footpath which leads to the Ferry over the river Tud. Having forced him into the ferry-boat, which they rowed into the middle of the stream, they threw him into the water, passed over to the other side of the river, and ran away. The Vicar it was said could not swim, and he was carried down the stream, then swollen with a considerable flood, and never again was seen in the parish of Tuddington.

But " Lycidas is not dead : " at least it is confidently asserted by his friends that he is now alive, and is residing at Rome, where he has taken Priest's orders, at the fountain head of succession. He was seen performing mass in a side chapel of St. Peter's Cathedral last spring, and is said to be writing a book against the Church of England ; a very luminous display of the Anglican heresy, " addressed, in a series of unanswerable letters, to the Bishop of London, by E. S. L. "

The Vicarage was burnt down to the ground,—the magistrates escaped unhurt, whilst the rioters were engaged with the Vicar,—the Vicar's house-

keeper, seeing the house in flames, saved her master's strong-box, containing his letters, papers, and will; and thus have been preserved those valuable documents which enable the Editor to lay before the public a sketch of the life and sentiments of the great Protestant Thomas à Becket.

THE END.

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